the watermark

volume xiv

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volume xiv

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editors' note

Looking back at the time we've spent working as editors for The Watermark, we realize how important this job has become in our lives. It's more than a job: the wonderful people we've worked with have become friends and family, and The Watermark has become a community. The writing and artwork we've had the opportunity to publish, and those we unfortunately could not, have inspired and humbled us. We feel that the books we've created are a testament to the dedication and talent of our student body.

With this, our final issue as editors, we hope you will see how much of ourselves are included in the book. And though we're sad to be leaving, we can't wait to see what next year's editors will bring to the journal.

We have nothing but gratitude for the generous support and contributions of more people than we can possibly name. So many people have been involved in the production of this issue, and our appreciation goes out to everyone, but especially our tireless staff, the invaluable faculty here, and our wonderful friends. We feel we must acknowledge some people by name: Caroline Taggart of the OHT Gallery (www.ohtgallery.com) for judging the Art Award and the Art Department and Margaret Hart for funding it; Joe Torra for judging the Chet Frederick Fiction Award; Martha Collins for judging the Martha Collins Poetry Award; Sven Birkerts for judging the Non-Fiction Award; the Creative Writing Department for funding the Fiction and Poetry Awards; Duncan Nelson and Joyce Pesseroff (printed with permission of Carnegie-Mellon University Press) for allowing us to include their work; the Undergraduate Student Senate; Caroline Coscia and the Graduate Student Assembly; Bernadette Levasseur and Brian LeBlanc at Atrium Reprographics for putting up with out last minute requests; Donna Neal and the Student Life staff for all their help; and everyone who submitted this year and in the past.

Congratulations and thanks to Skyela Heitz for again providing us with a beautiful cover—her other pieces can be found on page 73.

To our staff: you rock! Honestly, we couldn't have done it without you. You have taught us that things you care about are worth fighting for, and you can find humor in even the hardest decisions. Good luck to everyone in whatever next year brings.

Amber Johns & Erica Mena
March 2006

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poetry

Tanya Boroff

December Sestina

The old house on a quiet street on a cul-de-sac burned
in my memory for many years before it turned
to ash, like most things in my memory do. I can't see
the headless Christmas carolers walking past,
singing out of tune, "through the years, we all will
be together, if the fates allow," my Jewish grandmother

helping decorate the tree, my other grandmother,
my mother's mother, in the kitchen, burning
gingerbread men, making hot chocolate that will
form a skin by the time we're done turning
the living room into a memory of a December past
that I'll spend many years forgetting to see.

The old house and all of us peeking out to see
carolers through a frosted window, my gentile grandmother
brushing back the always black hair that hung past
her shoulder blades, the candles on the menorah burning
on the mantle the week before Chanukah turned
into Christmas, the red leaves of the poinsettias wilting

and the gingerbread burning in the kitchen will
fade from memory too soon and everyone I see
in my dreams will be faceless as the calendar pages turn
and the last Christmas card from my grandmother
fades and yellows and all the oil that burned
through Chanukah is nothing but smoke from the past.

The old house on the quiet street just past
the reservoir that I can't see when I drive by will
always be on a cul-de-sac with Christmas lights burning
in the big bay window where I still can't see
the tree, the menorah and both my grandmothers
stringing lights on the mantel and taking turns

lighting candles and putting records on the turn-
table, White Christmas, Mi Yamalel, until just past
midnight behind the bay window, my grandmother's
hair will turn old, the snow will fall, and the moon will
grow dark over the old house I can't see
but the strings of lights and the menorah continue to burn.

In December I remember both my grandmothers passing
by in memories in the house on the cul-de-sac, where candles will
burn always behind the bay window as the calendar pages turn.

Craig Carroll

Seventeen Seventy-Six

I'm thinking of a number
between a rusting Pontiac
and grass growing through it;
between a bread box
and King Kong.

I'm thinking of a number
between a fallout shelter
and the year of our lord;
between the world wide web
and Japanese internment camps;
between pickled eggs and feather-pens.

I'm thinking of a number
between String Theory
and a half-price sale on shoes;
between the big bang
and the book-of-the-month-club;
between uranium
and a princess cut;
between love
and an apple martini;
between "Hell hath no fury
like a woman's scorn"
and, "C'mon,
what's the worst that could happen?"

I'm thinking of a number
between John Doe
and Paris Hilton;
between a basketball net
and the Homecoming Queen;
between the underdog
and V-for-victory;
between peace
and the war on date rape.

I'm thinking of a number
between Ford and Frasier;
between Laissez Faire
and Monday,
retirement and leash laws,
menopause and wisdom teeth,
cherry-flavored cough medicine
and Alcoholics Anonymous,
the divorce rate
and lust at first sight;
between hardcore porn
and soft rock.

I'm thinking of a number
between prohibition and trustbusters;
between neurotransmitters and ghost busters,
trigger-fingers and subtext,
tub sex and Texas;
between turnpikes and runaway brides,
trench coat mafias and transcendentalism,
environmentalism and white trash;
between Isolationism and an Empire-
State of mind.

I'm thinking of a number between you and me,
Compadre;
between Vietnam and gasoline;
between Catholics and condoms,
Jews and franks,
Islam and Kitty Hawk,

the axiom and the Pentecost,
Hollywood and India,
Indians and labor unions,
bullshit
and the luck of the Irish.
I'm thinking of a number between black

and blue;
between "this vial of poison"
and the old switcheroo;

between 2001
and 1492.

Meghan Chiampa

Chuck Taylor's Enlightenment

Buddha stood alone rubbing his temples with his forefingers.
His eyes were squeezed shut.
"Where the hell was I going?" he asked himself.
He was wearing a love-worn pair of red Converse high-tops,
the sole of the left sneaker becoming unglued.
Buddha raised his left foot and the back half of the thin rubber sole
hung limply like a bloodhound's ear.
He shook his left foot and the sole flapped in the air.
"Where the hell was I going?" he asked the sole.
The tip of the red sneaker smiled at him like a white half-moon.

Jennifer Gentzyel
A Wise Man
Charcoal

Danny Diamond

Points North

My reflection in the silver-
less mirrors of subway windows
sits sipping whiskey (my
eyes are darkrooms
of undevoloped film).

I stare at screens of scheduled
departures with my legs
and thoughts
crossed, waiting
for the express
to Gloucester (my mind maps
its curbstones lined with drunks

who in Lent have left their Lady
of Good Voyage balancing
between dark-
blue domes of the Cathedral
with a schooner tucked
safely under her arm).

The twin lighthouses spin
their synchronized beams
clockwise, like white hands
over a black-faced sea
while me and my

offshore friends sail
the mainline, telling stories
about catching kilos of china-white
fish (collapsed fins
and hollow fangs that find
the fishermen's forearms
when the neoprene nets
are brought aboard);

telling stories about oysters
who swallow rosary beads. No
one believes them.
Not even the painted
plaster statue of St. Peter
on the ship's bow.

Not even on
the nights when
narcotic winter wind
numbs our net-
works and there's nothing
to do but nod off

on a pillow of nembutol
with a needle
that always points North
toward a Canadian coastline
where the sirens
sing advertisements
for single-barrel scotch.

Danny Diamond

Dialogue with Bodhi Satva

"Lately I'm not so sure that coming down
was a good idea, I was happier
while we were still in the trees."

"If it were up to me, we'd never
have left the oceans."

"How many times will we have to come back
to this world?"

"As many as it takes before
you stop asking that question."

"Do humans only create in order
to destroy?"

"Yes. But we destroy so that we
can understand, and understand in order
to create ourselves.
That's why time only moves
in one direction—toward the day
when we will be destroyed."

"Have you ever been to heaven?"

"I've passed through it."

"Is it true that men fit the word of God
onto sheets of paper?"

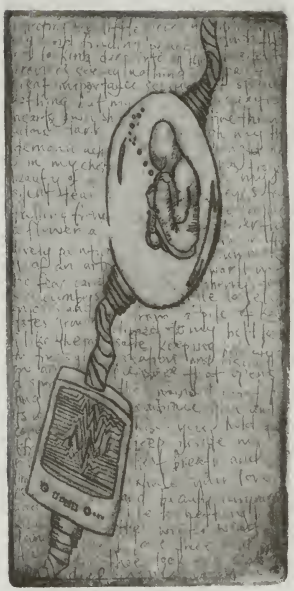
"Yes. Each tab is large enough
for a lower-case i."

"What was I
saying? I seem to have lost
my train of thought."

"Don't worry. All thoughts are round-
trip tickets."

"Why should we bother to go on
writing poetry?"

"God is the question
asked by each moment: 'What
are we?' and poetry
is the courage to reply."



Margaret Kessel
Awakening | *Evolution*
Print

Dan Madden

3 Poems

Slicing an onion
I thought of the world
and wept.

*

I've learned to not trust men
who wear moustaches. The evilest men
wear moustaches. Beards
are for the wise or psychotic. Lenin
had a goatee but his head
was bald and sinister.
I'm on the fence about him.

*

At the oblivion Halloween party,
my high school sweetheart
strapped a river to her back
and went as Ophelia.

S. Donovan Mullaney

Chief Sunday's Squaw

"Get up, get up," my mother said, "Chief Sunday's
Squaw is dead. Dig a hole in the yard."
Tuesday morning we buried the llama.

I couldn't close Sunday's eyes all the way,
but three tugs softened her death stare.
A final shearing so mother could make a scarf
for my stepfather: "She'll keep him warm when
chemotherapy makes him cold."

Standing on the grave, I thought: the ground
doesn't exist—just small particles suspended
in a galaxy of space, behaving as if they relate.

A scientist put an electron in a magnetic box
and split it into two protons, which he separated.
Apart, each kept circling, acting as though they were still
attached, still *one thing*. Like my grandmother and her twin
sister, who would travel 2000 miles and arrive
wearing the same outfit in different colors.

I've stood on their graves too—
six feet below protons I once revolved around,
from "cuchy-coo" to "This time I won't
pull through." They're gone; I'm already going.
Eighteen-thousand-dollar porcelain teeth
are all that will be left.

Sunday gave my stepfather a scarf, my mother a purpose
in the morning, me words that will last as long as paper,
or as long as bytes on a hard-drive remember
to stick together.

I think of Emily Dickinson burning in private,
eighteen-hundred poems strong. Who knew?
Except death and those who stopped for her
after him. And now the rest of us.
Perhaps what she wrote
was a kind of karmic record—
God's or dharma's uncrashable, impervious
read-only memory.

We'll plant an oak tree over Sunday. When it falls,
the vibration will have to pass an eardrum
to become a sound. Otherwise, it just falls.

Abdurrahman Wahab

Titles II

1
On an ocean of milk…
I follow a long line
of printed footsteps
leading to my self.

2
In a broken mirror
a man
white-haired and white-bearded
under snow…quivering
making wishes.

3
A robin—
jumping from branch to branch
of the leafless tree
drinking from the melting snow—
landed on my closed window
attracted to my red breast.

4
A stone
of Babylon
my heart after love…
her name on it
cuneiform.

5
A bunch of rusty leaves—
scattered…decaying
under one inch of silver snow—
create a figure
of me…

6
Snowing…
I dream of the sunbeams
Sweating…
I dream of snow flakes.

fiction

Carmela Caruso

Funeral

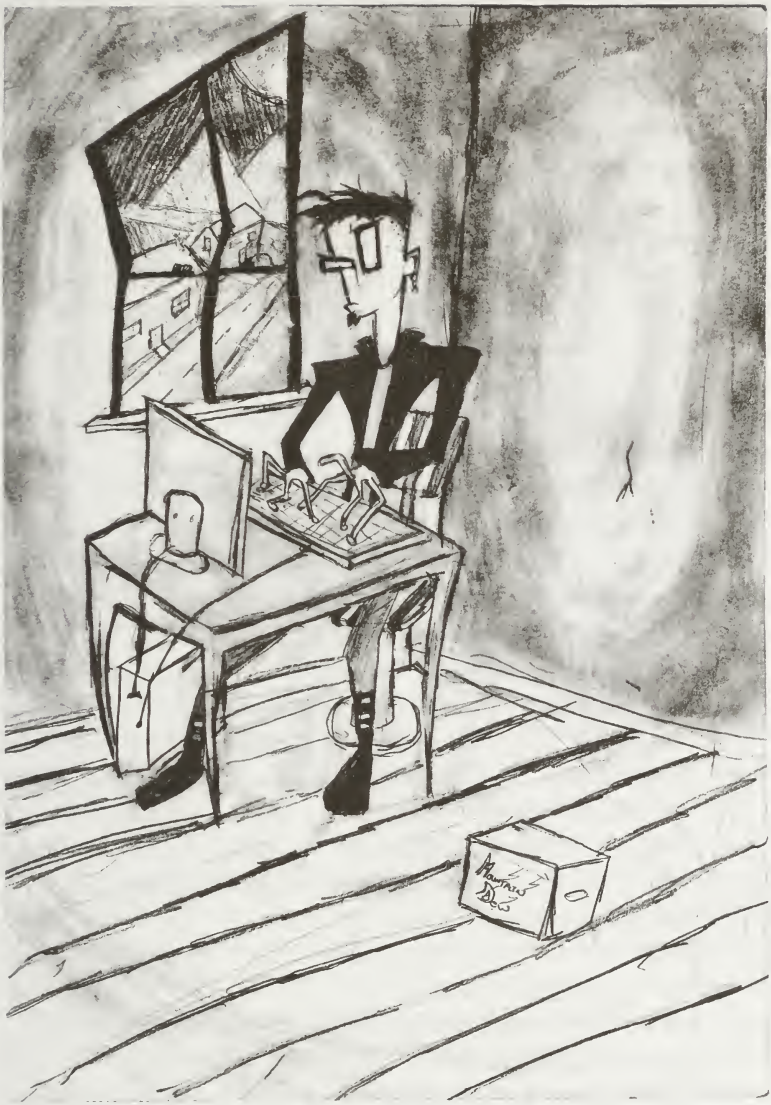
It was in January when his body was lowered into the frozen earth. The casket, with bright colored flowers draped along the edges, piled high, blooming heavenward, looked out of place among the black-clad mourners. Although it was nearly noon when the last car pulled in and parked along the winding path, the sun barely filtered through the dense, gray blanket masking the sky. The air was still but painfully freezing.

A priest stood beside the coffin, opened his black book, and began reading from a marked page. No one seemed to care, or at least no one voiced their disapproval when the priest mispronounced the name of the deceased. Most just stood erect, motionless, staring blankly at the dried up patches of grass by their feet. Their cheeks were as dry as the flowers that leaned clumsily against neighboring headstones.

One woman, once mother to the corpse that lay inside the casket, struggled quietly, trying to control her sobs. She choked on air as it passed unsteadily through her parted lips. Her thin frame bent forward, eyes barely open. In her right hand she held a red rose, thoughtfully distributed by one of the funeral directors. After the priest said his final words, the mother moved slowly toward the casket, arm and flower outstretched. The sun had found a way through the clouds and it slanted cleanly down, slicing through the gray. The light illuminated a single tear as it slid from her sunken cheeks.

The mourners walked quickly to their cars, pulled the doors closed tightly, turned knobs to filter in heat and the steady rhythms of the radio. Most drove in silence on their way to the hall where food had already been arranged upon rows of tables, covered in long, bleached-white tablecloths. They filed into the mirrored room, as if attending a family reunion. Cries of *Look how big you've gotten*, and *So good to see you* were sporadically called above the murmur of voices. The sound of forks scraping against the pale, ceramic plates filled the room. One could easily have mistaken the gathering for a wedding had it not been for the dark colored dress.

At the head of a table, one aunt sat looking critically around. She wore a deep purple pantsuit, the fabric slinking over her obese figure. Pressing her index finger to the plate in front of her, she collected the crumbs from her third cannoli and licked them noisily away. Not at all beneath her breath she repeated, "He'll go straight to hell for this; straight to hell."



Chris Moore
Me
Cartoon

Meghan Chiampa

Instructions for a Botched Suicide

You are going insane.

You decide to call him again. The phone rings four times before his answering machine picks up. A recording of his voice says he isn't there and to leave a message. You think his voice sounds sexy on the answering machine and you start biting your nails. The machine chirps. You breathe into the receiver of the telephone because you have nothing to say. You become anxious and afraid and you hang up the phone. You sit staring at the phone resting motionlessly on its black cradle. You wonder if he'll know you called. You wonder if he'll know it's your breath recorded on his machine.

You sit cross-legged on the cold marble tiles of your kitchen floor picking strands of your own hair off your sweater. You are thinking about his answering machine. You decide to smoke a cigarette. Your cigarettes are in a pocket of your black leather jacket. Your jacket is hanging from a peg on the wall. You fish your hands into the pocket tracing the inner lining with your fingertips. The pockets are empty except for a receipt from the pharmacy. The receipt is for a pregnancy test that is resting on your kitchen table.

You crumple the receipt in your hand and remember that you smoked your last cigarette last night when you were very drunk. You stumbled into the foyer of your apartment building with him holding you up, helping you stand. You clumsily lit a cigarette and he reminded you that you can't smoke in your apartment building. You told him to fuck off and you put the cigarette out on his sneaker. The sparks spat out onto the floorboards and you could smell burning plastic. You're surprised that you can remember when you ran out of cigarettes because the rest of the night is a milky blur.

You decide to buy cigarettes because it is something to do.

It's completely dark at five o'clock and that makes you depressed. The world outside your apartment is damp and alive. It had rained all morning and the streets and trees and cars are covered in a layer of moisture. It's cold and you can see your

breath. You start thinking about summer and the beach and the way you dug holes in the sand when you were young.

You think about the time you went to the beach with him and fucked on a flannel blanket during a meteor shower. The sex was terrible. Sand clung to every sticky surface of your body but you didn't care because the sky was so beautiful. You remember making a wish on a shooting star while he was fucking you. You wished to live forever.

You walk to the convenience store. It's the store you've gone into a thousand times before but still don't know the name of. You hold the door for a wrinkled Puerto Rican man wearing a faded red hat. You want to shove him into an oily puddle.

You step into line behind some college students. They act rightfully stoned or smashed on beers or high on their parents' benzos. They are giggling into their mittens. One of the students is holding a block of cheddar cheese and the other is holding a pine tree shaped air-freshener packaged in a leaflet of plastic. You peek over the shoulder of the student holding the air freshener to see what scent it is. Mountain Rain.

The clerk begins to ring up the college students. He takes the cheese and asks the students if that is it. The student holding the air-freshener falls to the tiled floor, laughing uncontrollably. You roll your eyes, step over the student, and approach the clerk behind the counter. The clerk is from another country far away that you will never visit. You ask for a pack of Camels and he cocks his head and looks at you the way a confused dalmatian. You repeat the word Camels again, louder and accentuated. The clerk throws his head back and releases an airy sound from deep within his chest. "Oooooh yes," he says, and reaches above his head for the cigarettes. You grab them, pay with cash, and step backwards. The student is still on the ground, curled into a ball, heaving with laughter.

You trip over the student and fall on your ass. You throw your hands out and your palms slap the sticky linoleum floor when you fall. Your legs are slung over the body of the student. The student stops laughing and looks up to you. Her face is pale and shocked. "I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!" she rambles and pulls herself to her feet. She grabs the arm of the other student and they both run out of the store, leaving the cheese and air-freshener behind.

The clerk walks into a back room like nothing ever happened. You think the clerk didn't see you fall.

You place a hand on your knee and grunt as you lift yourself off the floor. You brush your jeans with your hands and zip up your leather jacket. You are alone in the store and you decide to steal a lighter. You are angry that the clerk didn't notice you and you are angry that you fell over. You quickly choose a blue lighter and shuffle out of the store. You light your cigarette in the entrance door alcove. It tastes good and refreshing and you feel okay for a moment.

You begin to wonder if he called you while you were at the store and you take a long drag off of your cigarette. You look back into the store and the clerk is still absent from the counter. You think about going inside and stealing something else.

But, you decide it's a better idea to throw yourself into the path of an oncoming bus.

You close your eyes tightly and perform a graceful swan dive into the filthy, rain-soaked street. Your face grates against the asphalt and you can feel the skin of your chin and cheeks ripping. Your stomach smacks against the hard surface of the pavement and your breath is forced out of your lungs.

Your eyes remain closed but you can see the bright headlights of the bus approaching. You lie completely still, face down in the street. Your arms are outstretched and you can feel pebbles embedded in the palms of your hands. Puddle water is seeping through the fabric of your jacket and jeans.

You wonder how it feels to be run over by a bus. You wonder if its massive wheels will crush your skull like a cantaloupe. You wonder if your jeans will be caught on the bumper and the bus will drag your lifeless body through the city.

The bus comes to a creaking stop inches away from your body. You turn your head, slowly open your eyes, and squint. You can see the undersides of the bus. You thoughtfully observe the greasy, black tangles of wires and pipes and steam.

You hear the doors of the bus flap open and your hear the clip-clop of people's feet stepping off the bus. You hear a child screaming like a banshee. You hear a man say, "Whoopsy-daisy."

The bus is huffing and humming, blinding you with its headlights. You realize that the bus driver doesn't know you are lying in the street trying to kill yourself and you decide to get up before the bus runs you over. You don't feel like dying anymore.

You stumble over to the sidewalk, dripping with brown water

and blood and grease and oil. Your right hand is torn open from your wrist to the tip of your thumb. You reach your left hand inside your coat, under your sweater, and you rest your palm on your lower stomach trying to feel something.

The skin of your stomach is cold and clammy like the night air. You imagine a pair of legs trying to kick their way out of your stomach. Little dimples of flesh rising and falling under your sweater.

A man walking a golden retriever walks up to you, "Are you okay?" he asks. You look at him with sad eyes. You try to send him telepathic messages.

You want to tell him all about Ben and how you got too drunk and about how you don't know if he came in you or not and about how there is a store bought pregnancy test lying on your kitchen table waiting to be pissed on.

You want to tell him that you've been waiting so long to have someone ask you if you are okay so you can tell someone that you are not okay. You want someone to embrace you and kiss you on the forehead and run fingers through your knotted hair.

"Are you okay?" He asks again. The golden retriever squats and begins shitting next to the bus stop sign. "I'm fine," you answer and you look away from him. You answer reflexively and you don't mean it. You call yourself stupid in your head. The man notices that your cheek is ripped and the skin of your chin has been scrubbed off.

"Are you sure?" He asks, stepping closer to you. He reaches his hand to your face and brushes a wad of your snarled brown hair behind your ear. He runs his thumb across the cuts on your face. You wince and you can feel liquid dripping from your eyelashes but you can't tell if the liquid is blood or puddle water or tears.

"What happened to you?" He asks.

"I fell in the store," you whisper and tip your head in the direction of the convenience store.

"You didn't do this in the store. You look like you got hit by a bus." The golden retriever is walking in slow circles around the man and the leash is winding around his legs. The man doesn't notice. He is too concerned with you.

You look up to the man and stop breathing. He is very pretty. You smile at the color of the man's eyes. His eyes are frosted blue like they were cut from a deep layer of an Alaskan

glacier. His skin looks like leather and you want to bite it and feel its thickness between your teeth. He sees you smiling and his eyebrows rise.

"I'm a nurse. Do you want to come over to my house and I'll patch you up?"

The man looks down at your torn hand, hoping you notice it too.

You can feel his eyes examining your body and you shiver with paranoia. If you go over his house and let him patch you up something bad will happen. Maybe the man will slice your body up into thin shreds and feed the shreds to his golden retriever. Maybe the man will tie you to a desk chair and fuck your tits while you scream into a handkerchief. Maybe the man will put the mouth of a shot gun against your temple and ask you if you believe in God.

You lie to the man and tell him that you are a nurse too and that you will be fine. He looks very disappointed and asks you if he can walk you home. "Well," you start to speak, and the golden retriever plunges his nose into your crotch and sniffs your jeans.

"Barclay!" the man scolds. "Cut that out!" He jerks the dog's leash and the retriever bows his head, ashamed. "I'll walk you. I don't mind," he says. You look at the man's eyes again. They are glistening with desperation and anguish. This man wants you, you think. This man is going to try to fuck you in the woods, you think.

"You're not going to try and kill me, are you?" you ask.

"No," he sputters, chuckling.

The man walks silently by your side and the golden retriever walks behind you, poking your ass with its nose. "Where do you work as a nurse?" He asks you.

"At the hospital," you say softly into the night air.

That's all you say to each other. You spend the walk with your head bent down watching the sidewalk sparkle in the moonlight.

You reach your house and you tell the man that it's your house and you thank him. "Are you going to be okay?" He asks. The golden retriever is pissing on your flowerbed. You remember the pregnancy test on the table.

"I'm going to be fine," you say with a grin. You hold up your torn hand. "I'm going to put some ointment on this." The man

grimaces.

"Ointment? I think you need stitches."

"Stitches are for pussies. All I need are a few butterfly bandages and I'll be fine. I've seen people come into the hospital screaming for stitches when all they need is a Band-Aid." The man laughs and you wipe your nose with the torn hand. He wishes you goodnight and commands Barclay to come. You march up the stairs of your apartment building wondering if he called you while you were out.

The apartment is dark except for the pulsating light of the answering machine. You walk down the hall ignoring it and you switch on the kitchen light. The pregnancy test hasn't moved. You pick it up and hold it in your hands like foreign currency.

You bring it with you into the bathroom and you unzip your jeans. You aren't wearing underwear. You let your jeans ride around your ankles as you squat over the toilet. You start pissing and you put the test in the trail of the piss-stream. The box says to wait a few minutes for results. Two bars means you are pregnant and one bar means nothing.

You sit holding the test in the torn hand and you watch as a thin pink bar magically appears. One bar. You shake the test, making sure there wasn't a mistake. You stare at the one bar and you feel your stomach drop.

You toss the test into the little purple barrel beside the sink. You take off your pants and throw them on the floor. You take off the rest of your wet clothes and throw them on top of your pants in a pile. You wash your torn hand in the sink. The sink fills with red water and brown water and black water. It looks like the desert sky. You look in the mirror and see that the skin on your face is red and scraped and gone in some places.

You open the medicine cabinet and grab a bottle of hydrogen peroxide. You unscrew the cap and pour the whole bottle of hydrogen peroxide over your head. It drips down your forehead and you squeeze your eyes shut. It cascades down your neck and shoulders and breasts. You feel the cuts bubble and fizz and tingle. Your hand is stinging. You wipe your eyes with toilet paper and open them. Your face is covered in splotches of white froth.

You walk out of the bathroom bubbling with patches of hydrogen peroxide. You notice the answering machine light blinking and you rip the machine from its cords and throw it

down the hall. The machine explodes on the floor and pieces of metal and plastic shoot in all directions.

You return to the medicine cabinet and pluck a bottle of Vicodins from the shelf. There are fifteen ivory pills in the bottle and you dump them all into your mouth. You hold them in your mouth as you tip your head under the faucet of the sink. You twist the knob labeled cold and you guzzle water until all fifteen pills slide down your throat and drop into your stomach.

You smile at yourself in the mirror and wave goodbye.

You go into the kitchen and pull the cigarettes from your jacket pocket. You place one on your lips and light a match. You inhale the smoke and watch it glide into the air like a ribbon of black ink floating in a glass of water.

You won't die. You'll come close to dying and that's all you really need.

Angie Melchin
Straddle | *On The Go*
Etching/Print/Softground

Kathryn Egan

My Kung-Fu Fighting Gecko

Jim and I understood each other. I appreciated his unusual hobby and he appreciated my hatred for almost everything else. My mom said Jim and I met only in my dreams, a kung-fu fighting gecko is not real, he was imaginary—especially after I blamed him for the grass stain in my brand new jeans. Once she got sick I told her all kinds of stories about Jim, and she stopped trying to tell me he wasn't real. However it was also about this time that our rendezvous were beginning to lessen. The Doctors were invading—like an army, all at once, and Jim told me we would not last. A thin line between Jim's kung-fu black belt and the faces of my mother's Doctors dripped together into the Christmas-tree color of vomit I had to clean from the pink plastic kidney bean beneath my mother's chin as she slept. I held the medical profession responsible for all things this color green.

I hated the smell in this office; the perfume of this morning's chemo disagreeing with last nights dry Special K dinner, and the old man loogie left behind to rot with the walls of the plastic trashcan by the door. This was how all Doctors smelled to me. The fold of cloth beneath my armpits would start to get wet whenever the white coat reached his web of cold fingers towards the hand I just cleaned. I could only picture the tips of this his fingers damp with the greenish yellow phlegm of past patients whose spit always lined that wastebasket. My mom said Doctors were the cleanest people alive. I disagreed and made her buy me anti-bacterial-no-water-needed hand sanitizer so I wouldn't embarrass her by scaling off to the restroom every time the doctor came out to shake my hand and call me 'sport.'

We went to the office five times a week. I chose to wear the red Polo shirt my mother had bought me when back to school clothing was the main concern at the end of our summer. "Third grade boys should look distinguished," she said. She always rolled my collar up, but lately she was too tired to remember.

I stared at the old *Highlights* magazines littering the painted

wood table in front of my chair beside the trashcan, taunting the readers with finding all the farm equipment hidden in the picture of a crayon covered painting of a pig trough. This time I couldn't find the hoe. I figured the circle on the answer key, boasting it had been found before, was aided by the watchful eye of a mother or older sister. That wasn't fair. I didn't have a sister and, according to this office, was soon to be absent of the other. I should leave a note: 'No cheating. Kids with dying parents only.' The hoe was circled in green crayon. Figures. I decided I should name crayons: "Phlegm vomit cancer" is what I'd call that one. My mom used to tell me to stop talking about phlegm, which is hard because it's my new favorite word. The pages of the *Highlights* that no one but me had time to read were torn with age and boredom; most of the articles were written in words bigger than the pictures, sticking together with lollipop juice and leftover snot from hands that had only seen this office once.

For the first time since we started coming here someone had taken my seat. I'd never seen him before and I guessed he was in third grade at some other school. His presence took the place of the usual cancer-ridden eggshells who were balding and using scarves full of colors to somehow add life to the draining absence of a face you'd never believed once laughed at funny movies. He didn't care about the *Highlights* or the puke trashcan by the door. Green fog surrounded him thumping like a vein every time he took a breath and continued watching the clock, as if at some point this would all be over. He saw me staring and told me that he hated my shirt. I told him there was no such thing as Santa Claus. He said he was only sitting here because his mom was getting better and God was going to cure her cancer. I told him Jim cured cancer and there was no God. He said there was no such thing as a kung-fu fighting gecko. I told him his mom was going to die. God didn't come to this office.

Ying Gong
In Her Shoes
Charcoal

Dana Kletter

Ramona

In the twilight time of American Industry, somewhere around 1972, my father was still performing the commuting ritual each day. He didn't tell us that the factory was empty, that the machines had been auctioned off, that all that remained of those years of creation and production were scraps of thread and an occasional empty bobbin rolling across the floor like tumbleweed. Instead, he went to the racetrack.

Each morning after my father left, my mother would get out of bed and began her ritual. She had always been a beauty, and she devoted her life to preserving and maintaining her looks. This required a rigorous regime.

First, she would do her exercises, a series of kicks and twists, followed by bicep curls with hardcover copies of James Michener's *The Source* and *War and Peace* in each hand. Then she would assemble a contraption she'd bought in Rome, a long, white kid-skin covered bench with a strap on one end that could be raised to a near vertical position by two elegant extendable legs. Placing her feet in the strap, she would hang upside down like a vampire bat for half an hour. She said the blood rushing to her head nourished her skin and her brain.

After this she would plunge her breasts in ice water: "to keep the tissue firm," she said. You could hear her screaming down the street. It was the sound to which we woke every morning, my two sisters Rachel, Rosie and I.

Then she would put on her false eyelashes and go back to bed.

She was lying just so, in bed, with her false eyelashes gently brushing her cheeks when my father came home one afternoon. We watched him from the kitchen table, where we were having our after-school Cheerios. He march slowly up the sets of stairs that tenuously connected the various levels of our house, and up to the master bedroom. He knelt by their bed with his hat still on and told my mother he had just gambled away the last $375 in their joint checking account, at Belmont, bet it all on the ponies.

It was not an unusual thing for my father to go to the racetrack. In fact it was expected, probably habitual. There was even a little joke in the family that we children had been taught to read using a racing form as our primer. And in the days of plenty, before business and American Industry had gone sour and there was less and less money and more and more melodrama, the visits to the racetrack had an air of bravado; swaggering and manly. So we three girls huddled in the doorway, watching for the inevitable tableau of confession and forgiveness. Instead my mother sat up with a shriek.

"What have you done?" she screamed.

"This is the last time, I swear to you, the last time I will ever go near the track."

My mother tugged on the neck of her chiffon dressing gown as if it was my father's long-departed hair she was pulling out.

"Honey," he started again.

"What have you done," she screamed again. "Do you realize what you've done? Do you know what this means? How will we pay for heat or food or back-to-school clothes for the children?"

"I'll make it up to you," my father said, looking surprised and a little offended.

"Make it up to me?" she bawled, then fell back on the bed and pulled the coverlet over her face sobbing.

Lately there had been signs that something more dire than the normal fluctuation of our fortunes was at work: the plundering of our college funds, the second mortgage on the house, the insurance fraud involving the theft of an imaginary emerald ring worth $30,000. Still, I couldn't understand what it was about this particular $375 that was so distressing.

He tried to pull the covers off her face and she swatted him with a silk scarf.

"You bastard," she shrieked. "You bastard, get out of this house."

My father stood up. He was a tall man with a broad chest, strong shoulders and beautifully manicured hands. On beach holidays he stood in the ocean like a one-man barrier island. The waves that tumbled we three girls under the water, somersaulting us to shore with the sea surging down our throats, the undertow that pulled us out into the darker deep, did not move him. He remained fixed and steady, while we climbed

onto him and clung to him. Now he seemed confused. I could feel Rosie trembling beside me. He shielded his face with one hand, pushed past us and left the house.

Once my father was gone, my mother sprang out of bed. She ran to her closets and began to open doors, pulling down hatboxes, shoeboxes and garment bags. Small bundles of money were secreted among the turbans, high-heeled slippers and negligees. She didn't stop to count it, but turned furiously into the dressing room mirror and began teasing her hair. When it had gained the appropriate mass and height she sprayed it into place with lacquer and announced, "I'm going out." Then she too pushed past us and left the house.

We ran to the window and watched her back the station wagon down the driveway like a getaway car, lurching and swaying, tires squealing. My grandmother came upstairs from the little apartment my parents had built for her, where the garage had once been.

"Come children," she said, "come downstairs with Grandma." We retreated to her kitchen, where we always went when my parents were fighting. She sat down at the kitchen table and motioned us to take our places, then took out a deck of cards and started dealing. She offered a pack of Winstons all around and doled out drams of Four Roses Whiskey. She dropped the stereo needle on a record and the Andrews Sisters began singing about the joys of rum, Coca-Cola and working for the Yankee dollar.

My father came back that night, but the bedroom door was locked to him. He collected some things from the linen closet and wandered around the house looking for a place to sleep. Clutching a pillow to his chest, a blanket tossed over his shoulders, he looked like the ghost of his own marriage bed. He still had his hat on. We were afraid to speak to him.

The next morning, Rachel, Rosie and I convened in the bathroom, the one designated to us, "the children's bathroom," my mother called it, even though it was full of the overflow from her own boudoir, her creams and elixirs and oils. We were all worried, and decided to distract ourselves by playing our favorite game, Isaac Newton.

"Did she mean it about not getting any new clothes?" Rosie asked. She added four drops of pre-prepared vinegar and water douche to the toothpaste and eye-drop mixture she was stirring

in the chasuble, which in this case was a plastic cup with a smiling pink pussycat on it. Rosie, the youngest at eight, had become very concerned with her appearance. Recently, right in the middle of Isaac Newton, she had stopped making potions with cosmetics and began applying them to her face.

"I hate those shirts," said Rachel, the middle child and the most melancholy of us all. She was talking about the matching lace-up corduroy shirts in earth tones my mother had bought on sale and condemned us to wear last year. Rachel listlessly shook a bottle of ancient cough syrup. "What will happen when winter comes," she continued, "and we don't have money for oil for the furnace. Or food. We'll be like those poor kids in Spinney Hill who eat frozen peas and baloney the government gives them."

The next morning my mother left early and when she came back it was with the triumph of someone returning from a successful crusade. She signified to the accompanying deliverymen where to put her prize with gestures like a trumpet flourish. It was a parrot, from the deepest Amazon, she said. It was bright green and yellow with sharp red and deep blue tail feathers and a virulently orange beak. It was housed in a huge brass cage filled with toys, a slide, a swing and many mirrors.

"What the fuck is that?" my father said.

"This is my parrot," my mother said haughtily. "I've named him Ramona." She peered through the bars of the parrot's cage.

"Are you out of your mind?" my father shouted.

My mother whirled to face him. "This parrot," she screamed into his face, "is going to live for one hundred years. I'm going to teach it to talk." She turned back to the parrot and began crooning to it, "Hello mommy, hello mommy, hello mommy."

"That goddamn thing is not staying in this house," my father thundered. "Take it and all that shit and return it right now."

My mother ignored him. She kept her back to him and continued to sing into the parrot cage, "Hello mommy, hello mommy, hello mommy."

"You crazy fucking, crazy fucking, crazy fucking," with each repetition my father's voice got louder, his face more red, "crazy fucking CRAZY FUCKING," and just then he shouted so loud that his false teeth surrendered their hold and dropped to the floor in front of him. His booming shouts were reduced to a series of resonant clicks that echoed in his empty mouth, like the glottal stops in a language spoken only by tribesmen in the

Kalahari.

"HA!" my mother shouted.

My father picked up his teeth and stalked out the door.

He returned home once more. He stood in the family room and watched my mother as she slipped the cover off the parrot's cage like Salome removing a layer of veil. She pretended he wasn't there.

"Why did you name it Ramona?" he asked suddenly. My mother, still ignoring him, began a little rhumba around the parrot's cage. She hummed a tune and my father took up the words. "*Ramona, when day is done you'll hear my call.*" My mother joined in, her throaty alto against his baritone, "*We'll meet beside the waterfall, I dread the dawn when I wake to find you gone.*" My mother took the lower harmony, as usual, and my father the melody for a dramatic ending, "*Ramona* (pause), *I need you* (pause) *my owwwwwwn.*"

"Delores Del Rio," my father said, after a moment.

"You have a small penis," my mother said.

She didn't move until she heard the door slam shut.

It had become apparent this would be different from other skirmishes. We had never seen my mother so volatile. She was like a mercury rocket just before countdown. She glittered with malice. It seemed to make her more beautiful. I thought it was sad that my father wasn't there to see it.

My mother got tired of talking to the parrot. It only answered her in squawks anyway. The dog began to bark at it. After a few weeks the parrot developed a fairly good imitation of the dog's signature deep wooo-wooo and began barking back at the dog.

My grandmother hated the parrot. She hated and feared it. She had lived through the Russian Revolution, ghetto, concentration camp, death march, smuggled herself on a boat to Israel and fought in the Haganah, but the parrot seemed to scare her more than anything. She felt it to be an evil thing, an ill wind, the harbinger of all my parents' acrimony and anger. She withdrew from us all and there were no longer comforting card parties with Grandma. She muttered curses in Romanian, a language that seemed particularly well suited to curses. And she cooked, chicken paprikash, goulash, matzoh ball soup, cake and donuts. Then she would invite only the dog in and feed him immense six course meals. The dog grew fatter and fatter.

His dog farts detonated like bombs and their putrescence was beyond belief.

My mother began to go out every night. We stayed up waiting for her, dragging ourselves to school in the morning, gray and worn from our vigil. One night, well after midnight, we heard a car outside. We watched out the window as she stepped out of a dark sedan we hadn't seen before and, leaning in the passenger side window, with one leg suggestively crooked, a pump dangling from her dainty foot, began passionately kissing the strange man in the car. When she broke away and we heard the front door open we scrambled for our beds.

In the night I would creep downstairs and sit by Ramona's cage. The parrot stood on one foot, its feathers bristling, its beak open in a soundless squawk. I opened the door of the cage and urged it to come out. It staggered from its perch and jumped to the floor and began prowling across the orange shag carpet with its wings pressed tightly back. It reminded me of an old man I'd seen at the skating rink, gliding jerkily along with his hands clasped behind him.

I had a fantasy that the parrot would become my constant companion. I thought it might sit on my shoulder, cock its head and repeat clever phrases I taught it, allow me to pet and hold it. In truth the parrot was a grim little presence. It glowered sullenly from its perch. It chewed up and spat back at you anything you fed it. We offered it bananas and it pecked at us. We gave it fresh green lettuce and it shit it out in terrible stinking yellow streams. "Hello, mommy, hello mommy," we pleaded with it. It only screeched incoherently.

One afternoon we came home from school to find my mother in conference with two strange ladies. They were sitting in the living room having coffee. My mother looked up at us and announced, "This is Mrs. Minskoff and Mrs. Wintergreen. They're real estate agents. I'm divorcing your father and selling the house." She went back to the conversation, running her hand along the watered silk wallpaper behind the couch. "I paid thousands for it," she said conspiratorially.

We retreated to the bathroom, stunned.

"I'd like to kill her," Rachel said, and we didn't bother asking who she meant.

"We can't leave," Rosie said, "this is where we live."

"Maybe not," Rachel said bitterly. "If she sells this house I'll

never forgive her."

I looked at Rachel doubtfully. She was always saying these ferocious things about hate and forgiveness, but night after night she was the one who sat by the window watching for my mother later and longer than the rest of us.

That night we stayed up again, but not waiting for our mother's return. We sat by my bedroom window where the moon shimmered on the leaves of a silver willow. The foghorns and the sea breeze reached us, even though we were a quarter of a mile from the bay.

"Remember the night we saw the moon make a circle around the house," Rosie whispered.

I remembered that night. I had told my sisters that the ring of light was the moon's good wishes, a protective spell that worked kind of like the forcefield the Starship Enterprise used to repel enemy fire, and that it would keep away harm and misfortune.

"You made that up, didn't you," Rosie said.

"I did not," I said. But we all knew I had.

Daily, Mrs. Minskoff and Mrs. Wintergreen, insufferable in their enthusiasm, led prospective buyers through the house, stopping to point out the fantastic Courboisier wallpaper in the kitchen, the huge brick fireplace and the huge sliding glass doors out to the flagstone patio. They loved demonstrating the intercom system. Mrs. Minskoff would send Mrs. Wintergreen down into the kitchen and then summon her through the device.

"Hellooo, Mrs. Wintergreen," she would croon into the device, like a medium trying to summon the dead.

"I'm here in the kitchen, Mrs. Minskoff," Mrs. Wintergreen would yell back, always too loud.

The highlight of the tour was a stop at the parrot's cage. People loved the parrot, they gathered around the cage to marvel at it. They all said the same inane things people say when they see a parrot, Polly want a whatever, look at the birdie. The parrot would bark or shriek. Sometimes it extended its wings like an eagle on a coin and stuck out its terrible thick black tongue. No matter what it did, no matter how loud or disgusting, people seemed to enjoy it.

When Rosie could bear these intrusions no more she took action. She began busily sabotaging the sale by defacing the house. "No one will want it if it looks ugly," she explained

practically. She removed all the doorknobs, broke door hinges and gouged the walls with a screwdriver. Caught up in Rosie's fervor we enlisted in her cause. After school we would rip the aluminum siding off the house. Demolition was our homework, and we were like miniature berserkers, empowered and impelled to smash, tear and destroy.

Rachel and I were prying tiles off the wall in the downstairs bathroom when my mother appeared and came upon Rosie carving her name in the hall closet. "What are you doing?" she shrieked at Rosie, dragging her out of the closet by her shirtsleeve. My mother called for us to come downstairs and we appeared, dusted with grouting and looking vaguely guilty. She lined us up in the kitchen. "You listen to me," she screamed. "You will behave like civilized people while this house is being sold, do you understand?" And then, to demonstrate how civilized people behaved, she smashed an entire set of dishes as we dodged and ducked the delicate china missiles.

One day, during a showing, the potential homebuyers were admiring the parrot when Ramona did something incredible. He stood on his head.

The prospective buyers clapped appreciatively.

"What a marvelous trick," one of them said.

"Is he asleep?" another asked.

"No," someone else scoffed, "it's a trick!"

Rosie pushed through the crowd and examined the parrot.

"He's dead," she announced solemnly. The buyers grew quiet, some looked concerned and some uncomfortable. Finally one kind lady asked, "Can we do something, dear?"

"I suppose you could eat it," Rosie answered.

No one moved. Suddenly my grandmother appeared. She came shuffling out of her apartment wearing two huge oven mitts and motioned everyone back as if they were encroaching on a crime scene. She reached into the cage and grabbed the dead parrot and then scuttled back into her apartment.

Moments later she reappeared with the parrot wrapped in aluminum foil. The shiny stuff had been molded tightly to the bird, adhering to its delicate contours, feet, and beak. Realtors and buyers alike seemed horrified and Mrs. Minskoff stepped forward, but she was unsure what my grandmother was about to do with the silver shrouded bird.

Feeling that grandma was about to take the serious matter of

pet burial into her own hands, we began to protest.

"What are you doing, Grandma?" Rachel yelled at her. We had our own little graveyard in back of the house, with Popsicle stick stars of David marking the graves of our many attempts at nurturing animal life, gerbils, kittens, a fat guinea pig named Jean Pierre who had died at a tragically young age. Ramona belonged with his brethren.

"What are you doing?" Rachel cried again, she tried to block the way but Grandma was already past her and through the sliding glass doors. With a skill no one suspected she possessed, she spiraled the parrot like a football across the backyard, over the hedge and into our neighbor's yard.

"Grandma! NO!" we all yelled.

"What?" she yelled back. "Is evil," and then made the sign to ward off the evil eye and spit three times through her fingers while reciting a protective incantation. Rosie started crying and Rachel and I began to protest in piercing yelps.

Grandma looked at us disgustedly. "What are you doing?" she yelled. "You make a circus."

"Ramona's dead," Rosie sobbed.

"Yoy, Istenem," Grandma looked up through the ceiling and spoke directly to God; "Help me with these stupid," she gestured at us. But God chose not to get involved.

Grandma leveled an angry glare at us, then ran back outside in her fluffy slippers and housedress, climbed through the hedge and began to search for the parrot's corpse. Rachel and I took Rosie to the kitchen to calm her down.

My mother walked into the house just as the buyers were leaving.

"What's going on?" she demanded.

"Your children," Mrs. Wintergreen said, "are abnormal." My mother turned to us.

"What have you done?" she said, eyes narrowed.

Just then Grandma appeared in the kitchen doorway. She was holding the parrot, gilded in foil like a tiny Tutankhamen. She glowered at us all and then threw the dead parrot at our feet.

"I tell you something," she hissed, "fuck you." Then she exited quickly.

Mrs. Minskoff gasped.

"This is too much," Mrs. Wintergreen said.

My mother tried to soothe them, but they refused her ministrations.

"You can just get yourself another real estate agent," Mrs. Minskoff said.

"You're never going to sell this house because everyone in it is crazy," Mrs. Wintergreen said angrily over her shoulder as they swept out the door.

My mother was too stunned to even try to kill us. She went upstairs and sat on her bed drinking sherry straight out of the bottle and bemoaning her impossible circumstances.

"You were all so beautiful when you were little," she lamented, "and now, now you're abnormal." When she achieved a state of sloppy drunkenness, she called my father in his hotel room.

"The children are monsters," she wept. My father agreed. "Please come home and beat them," she implored.

My father came home that night. He chased us around and hit us with his belt and then my parents reunited over the distrust and distaste for us. They kissed each other tenderly and then went into their bedroom and closed the door.

In the morning they announced that they were going to start a new life together. The house would have to be sold and we were to move far away, to another state. My mother called our new school and got the name of a good child psychiatrist before we even got there.

"Because they're crazy," she explained to my father.

Shuyi Deng
Fall

Abdurrahman Wahab

The Brown Kite

The setting sun had a vivid reflection on his dark brown hair as he appeared little by little, jogging and approaching the ruins. Those houses had been deserted a long time ago when he was still an infant in his mother's arms. He hadn't seen anyone inhabit them himself, but, according to his mother's dream talks, they must have been very nice houses at one time. His mother stopped talking the night she gave birth to him. When he first opened his eyes, he had a mute mother and no father at all. "Her tongue is dead," the old woman kept saying, "the whole village died since then..." But the moment his mother fell into deep sleep, while patching her nightgown with pieces from her wedding dress, she started talking and talking, about everything. He could hear his mother's voice only when she was asleep. He was not sure whether she would sound the same if she talked while she was awake, but he still liked to listen to her voice. It was the only voice of his mother. He took nothing she said for granted, resisting sleepiness and the boredom of long nights in order not to miss any word. And now, since she had told him through gestures, not to get near those ruins during darkness, he tended to obey. Her stories were the only source of information he had, the only account of the past. The only talking people in the village were the old woman and himself. He was not sure if the old lady talked in her dreams as well, but every night he waited for his mother to fall asleep. He stayed all night unable to sleep until sunrise, listening to his mother talking about those ruins that once were very beautiful and swarming houses, full of joy, and full of pigeons and sparrows lining the muddy roofs, cooing and chirping.

Just the night before, his mother talked more and more about the raid, about the men and boys, about the screams, and about a lot of nose-bleeding. He was scared to hear all that, but it was the usual story of his nights. He loved nightfall despite the fright and horror it brought. But he stayed awake because he loved his mother's voice. He could feel the pain in her boney chest as she rubbed her shriveling breasts with both hands while

telling the stories. He never understood his mother's pains. But when he once heard in his mother's talks that babies drink milk from their mothers' breasts he thought that was only a fairytale, because he couldn't remember doing such things. He believed the talks about the wreckage and the inhabiting ghosts more than the talks about breast milk. He couldn't imagine himself sucking a part of his mother for food. He couldn't remember seeing anything like that even with the goat. She also had withering teats, and for a short time she had milk in them. But on an afternoon like that day a long time ago, wandering around in the ruins, he saw the goat's teats bigger and a newly born baby goat trying hard to suck her mother's breasts. He wondered what might happen if he did the same, and was surprised when he felt a strange taste at the end of his mouth and a feeling of nausea after he became breathless and dizzy sucking. The amount of milk was not enough to help him remember the taste, yet he still hated it. But that was a long time ago.

And now that he was passing by the remains of the empty houses, the echo of his footfall filled the ruins and made him remember his mother's words about those houses once being populated. He could imagine now how they might have been. The echo of his breath fading into the sound of the cracking rubbles from the decaying walls under his feet gave him a resemblance of the crowd of people in his mother's stories. He actually didn't want to believe everything about those stories, but they were the only accounts he could hear about the past. And they were from his mother, from her voice. He liked his mother's stories. What he remembered himself was a blurred picture of the village not so much different from now. The only difference he could feel about the village was that things were less blurred and with little shades of color here and there. He could remember some green on the trees and some brownish-yellow stains scattered on the ground. He also could remember that the sky had some hue like blue, but he was not sure if this was from his memory or it was from his mother's stories.

As he started to run faster by the ruins, an echo was chasing him, like a gray ghost, fading away from one empty house to the other; the faster he ran, the faster the ghost floated alongside him. With each step on the dry and cracked ground, a brown cloud of dust rose from under his feet, mixing with the sound of the ghost and cracking stones that were scattered everywhere

from the decaying houses. His breathing echoed like people talking inside the ruins, his heartbeats like the drum that made them dance. Hearing his own heartbeats mixed with his gasps, he could imagine the last party the village had, according to his mother's talks in her sleep. It was the biggest crowd the village had seen in ages, according to his mother. Everybody was dressed up in their best. Approaching the village from far would give any traveler a sense of a mid-spring after a heavy shower of refreshing rain on the green grass and newly sprouted buds on the oak and mulberry trees. One couldn't differentiate between the wild daffodils and primroses and the people wearing all the colors of the rainbow. The sound of the drum and the dance moves were mixed with the laughter and enthusiasm of the young boys and girls exchanging promises of happy future filled with fervor and love. But it was not a coincidence that the party was the same day when the Peshmargas[1] came down the mountain behind the village which provided protection to its inhabitants. The villagers knew that the fighters were coming to their former comrade's wedding. Although some of the elderly suggested that they change the celebration date or at least do it in a calmer atmosphere, the young and hot-blooded Peshmargas didn't listen and assured the villagers that nothing was going to happen. After all they were freedom fighters and were not afraid of the enemy. If not, why then was their name "Peshmarga?"

Arriving to this part of the story, his mother always became angry in her sleep and started spitting on everything, and swearing, using strange curse words he had never heard before, making him cover himself with the only piece of old patched blanket they had in the house. This point in the story always changed his mother's voice and tone, making it hard for her to speak the words. That's why he had to listen very carefully to catch as many parts of the story as he could, and leave the vague ones for the next night, hoping to work on completing the rest of the shredded picture. Each morning he went out to look for proof. Seeing some hints like a torn drum and the remains of muddy houses gave his mother's stories some credibility, but talking about the beauty of the village and the protection of the rocky and bare mountain in the north was more like a fable for him than real. His mother kept saying in her sleep, "We Kurds have only the mountains as our friends and supporters…," but he saw the mountain under which the village was situated in

complete contrast. Every night, the huge old mountain, like an angry ogre, rained the once-was-a-village with rocks, sliding dirt and pebbles, destroying the remains of houses and partially standing walls. And only the night before, the mountain threw a huge rock down on the village, which landed over the top of the big house once owned by the agha, the head of the village, flatting it to the ground. The crash of the rock on the house broke the door and smashed the windows of the small mosque with the beheaded minaret beside the big house. Since it smelled like a stove and was burned like coal, he never attempted to enter the mosque. He had never seen the inside, and curiosity took him first in the morning when he went out of the house after a long sleepless night to see that the door of the mosque was broken wide. But he had to wait until the sun was clear in the sky in order to pass the ruins, as his mother told him in her sleep-talks.

Passing by, running as fast as he could, his footfalls and his heartbeats awakened the old lady, who was sitting in front of her house, or what was left of it, waiting. Since he remembered, it was her habit to sit there, planting her sharp elbows into her skin-and-bone thighs and putting her wrinkled hairy chin on her shaking palms. She was waiting and waiting for her husband and her almost-bridegroom son who were taken along with his own father and all the men and boys in the last raid on the village. Every male in the village was taken; even the male goats were not spared. The first time he saw her, after being able to crawl out of the dim room in which he was born, she was in the same spot in the same condition, facing the last point in the narrow road heading south that swallowed all the men, old and young. She was waiting for time to rewind and reverse the motion of the khaki army trucks, hopping to bring back her husband and her son. She and his mother were the last two who kept waiting when all the other women and girls hopelessly left the village or died and were buried, some in their wedding dresses and some others in their nightgowns. But this old lady never quit waiting and never left her place, not even for a very short time, in case they came back. She wanted to be ready to welcome them, to open her arms and hug them tight, to wash their faces with her tears, and to sniff their dusty hair. Sometimes he approached her to make sure she was still alive; seeing her shaky hands would assure him she was. He

didn't understand why she never moved. He tried to talk to her several times, but receiving very little from her, he lost interest in talking. He didn't want to disturb the quietness that covered the village like a giant tent choking the few remaining living beings. And now it was his footsteps that filled the village with so much unfamiliar noise his own ears couldn't bear. That morning when he got out of the house after hearing the end of the story from his mother, he had a strong desire to shake up the calmness that had dominated the village since he was born crying, filling the deep valleys around the village with his shriek. He wanted to see if there was really any sound left in the world; he wanted to know if the stories he had heard for years now had any grain of truth in them.

He wanted to climb the mountain and give the village and the valleys around it a good quiver of a scream. But while on the way, he remembered the last cry he heard from the almost-bride as she threw herself from the top. The fear he felt remembering her cry, that lasted until she hit the ground, made him hesitate and quit the idea. The almost-bride of his mother's stories had her last smile from the wedding party on her face the whole time, although her cheeks had two salty rivers coming down from her coal-black eyes that were gradually turning white. A couple of winters ago, when he heard the scream come down the mountain, he wanted to see if her face had the smile on it or not, but he could never reach the body deep at the bottom of the dark valley.

And now that he had the brown pages he found in the burned mosque while climbing down the mountain made him wonder what they were really for. After curiosity led him into the mosque, he found himself sinking in the ashes of burned books and shelves, blackened walls, and a melted clock on the wall. The dusty green color of a piece of cloth captured his attention. It was wrapping a bulky book on the only shelf still hanging on the wall. The book was full of brown pages, most of which had charred edges or were blackened completely. Wondering what it was, and attracted by the remaining ornamentation and arabesque the pages had, he tore off two pages and quickly left the mosque, running and passing by the ruins that echoed his breath, his heartbeat, and his footsteps, with a kind of joy he had never felt before.

He suddenly stopped when he felt that the old lady was

not in her place. His heart started to thump faster and faster, his ears started to ache. He looked around for her, but sensed no movement in the village. An unfamiliar fear made him shiver cold from head to toe, and a drop of sweat slid down his back. He found himself heading towards his decaying home, thinking of the best way to gesture the unusual happening to his mute mother. He was not sure whether this change would make her happy or sad. But it was the most unusual thing to have occurred in the village since the long fading scream. He was eager to reach home, only to be surprised to find the old lady in front of his house standing on the threshold, leaning on the muddy wall. He approached her, his heartbeats drumming harder and harder, his ears aching more and more. But he could hear no heartbeats when the old lady opened her mouth and gave him a sound more like a fading whisper. He didn't wait to clarify the hissing sound that came from the old lady's toothless mouth. He entered the house, then the room where he last left his mother, asleep. In the thin sunlight coming through the small window high in the wall, he could see her face, calm and peaceful. His sight blurred and his mother's face was vanishing. He rubbed his eyes to clear the view, and found his hands wet. It was the first time his eyes had flooded with tears. He couldn't identify the feeling, but could remember the ever-soaked eyes of his mother and the two salty rivers the screaming bride had on her cheeks. But when he cleared his eyes, he found his mother's hands on her breasts, motionless as the branches of the burned oak and mulberry trees around the village.

He could hear a whisper from the old lady behind him, again. "Her heart...her heart was shrinking everyday... like her tongue...until nothing is left of it..." A very short moment of serenity, then the hissing sound came again. "She is happy now." He could see his mother's face as the sunbeam, full of tiny flying flecks of dust, struck her, making her wet eyes glitter and sparkle like two emeralds, shining into the dark corners of the empty room and drawing a rainbow through the darkness. It was the only time he saw her face so calm and her hands resting peacefully on the nightgown she had been patching.

He turned around to find the old lady gone. It was very peaceful. The only sound he could hear now was his heartbeat. He looked at his mother's face again, and at her motionless hands. He quickly grabbed what was left from the wedding dress

and promptly left the house, running. He could feel coldness on his cheeks with each drop sliding from his eyes and landing on the dusty dry ground. There was no more dust from his steps as he watered the cracked ground with his tears, giving the village a smell of fresh earth. Running as fast as he could, his hands were dissembling his mother's wedding dress, making a long white thread. He could see the old lady sitting on the same spot as before as he passed by her to get to the top of the hill where her eyes looked all the time. While on top, he could see the continuation of the narrow road leaving the village like an enormous serpent disappearing through the chain of bare and burned mountains. He took out the brown paper sheets he found in the burned mosque, and with the thread, he made a kite. He didn't wait for the wind to blow, but started to run back through the deserted village, passing by every ruin, and watering with his sparkling tears the roots of the growing moss that had started to cover the cracked ground, with the brown kite high in the sky playing with the setting sun.

[1] Kurdish guerrillas. The literal meaning of the word is "those who face death."

Andrea Lynn Souza
Untitled | *Untitled*
Black & White Photography

non-fiction

Gintautas Dumcius

Mediaeval Murder, Incorporated: The First Terrorists

In April 1192, on a Wednesday evening that was most likely cool and dry, the Marquis Conrad de Montferrat set off on the return road to his palace. Montferrat, who had been crowned the Crusader King of Jerusalem earlier that year, had grown impatient waiting for his wife to get out of the bath, and decided to go to the Bishop of Beauvais's house for dinner. But the bishop had already eaten, and Montferrat started back down the small streets of Tyre, a city fifty-one miles south of Beruit. He was promptly knifed by two young fidaiins—assassins—who for six months had posed as Christian monks, in what has become an infamous murder by an even more infamous order, the Ismaili Assassins.

"In a narrow street two monks, whom he knew to be Christian converts, accosted him with a letter," according to Enno Franzius's account in his History of the Order of Assassins. "As he reached for it, they stabbed him. One of fidais was seized. The other fled to a church, where he hid. By chance Montferrat's attendants carried him to the same church to dress his wounds." According this account, the fidai flew out of the shadows to deliver the final blow, and killed the Marquis.[1]

Historian Charles Nowell, in his recounting, points out that it is when they initially stab him that the story starts to change, depending on who your source is. One version has him taken to the church where one fidai was hiding, as recounted above, another has him taken to his house where he dies, and another says "that the Assassins, or at least one of them, lived long enough to confess that the Old Man of the Mountain had sent them on their errand."

Terrorism expert Walter Laqueur notes that the "success of a terrorist operation depends almost entirely on the amount of publicity it receives."[2] On that score, the Ismaili Assassins did incredibly well. A Shi'ite subsect, they were called the Ismailis due to their belief in Isma'il as the legitimate Iman, "while the rest of the Shi'a recognized his brother Msa."[3]

The murder of Montferrat remains the Assassins' most famous, and one that helped catapult them to fame (fortune, they already had) throughout Europe and the Middle East, leading the courts of kings and queens to whisper of their involvement in murders and assassinations even when there was no evidence. The sect also helped to sow chaos by taking credit for assassinations they didn't commit. "The frequency with which the Old Man of the Mountain was brought into European political intrigues in which he could not have had the remotest interest, shows how he was regarded in the West. He had such a reputation for conducting a mediaeval 'murder incorporated' that a favorite method of throwing discredit on anyone was to accuse that person of being connected with the Old Man."[4]

But who were the Assassins and their leader? There were, in fact, two branches of the killer sect: one in Syria and the main one, based in Persia, where Alamut, their mountain fortress, was located. Each was led by an "Old Man of the Mountain," and while a man named Hassan Sabbah was the original, it was Syria's Rashidu'd-Din Sinan, after he took over in 1168, who gained wider notoriety across Europe and the larger Middle East after he achieved independence from Alamut. "[Europeans] knew next to nothing about the Persian headquarters of the sect until the Assassin power had vanished," according to Nowell.[5] As historian Bernard Lewis pointed out in his 1952 article, "The Sources for the History of the Syrian Assassins," "[f]rom William [the Archbishop] of Tyre onwards most of the western chroniclers of the Crusades have something to say about the Assassins, and a few striking events like the murder of the Marquis Conrad de Montferrat in Tyre in 1192 spread the fame and terror of 'The Old Man of the Mountain' far beyond the confines of Syria."[6]

Counting ten fortresses, William of Tyre wrote, "I have often heard their number [of men] estimated at higher than sixty thousand. These people have the custom of choosing the ruler who governs them, not by virtue of hereditary right but only on the basis of merit. He is called the Old Man, to the exclusion of all other titles of dignity. They are so submissive and obedient to him that there is nothing too difficult or dangerous for them to undertake eagerly at his command... The ones who receive the order go at once to carry it out, not stopping to inquire what the consequences will be or whether they will be able to escape."[7]

The Syrian Ismaili Assassins, like their Persian brethren, "reserved their daggers for the rich and powerful, not stooping to attack the humble and the poor."[8] And while both branches originally killed for religious and political purposes, over the years their policies generally changed, moving from religiously-motivated murders to ones for money, coming in line with the current definition of the word "assassin," the etymology of which their acts spawned, as we know it today.[9] It was this move, away from religion, and away from their original purpose of undermining Sunni Islam (which makes up the largest group in bi-furcated Islam, with its belief that the first four caliphs were the rightful successors to the Prophet Muhammed), that may have helped lead to their eventual decline. As with its rise, the decline of the Persian branch started with a Hassan, nearly forty years after the original died in 1124. "He claimed divine honors for himself, saying he was the Imam for whom all Ismailites had been waiting. He actually seceded from the religion of Islam and declared that with him a new dispensation had begun," Nowell wrote. [10] "It so weakened the Persian Assassins that they never recovered their former prestige. They lasted for almost another century and the later grand masters [as the Old Men were also called] nominally adhered to Islam or not as they individually chose. But the Syrian branch of the order, which had been started in the lifetime of Hassan Sabbah, now became the more active and was in fact, if not in theory, the leading one."[11]

So in the murder of Montferrat, it was clear who had orchestrated the murder. "[T]he real question was who had been the instigator. It has never been answered with certainty," Nowell says.[12] But Franzius writes that under torture, the fidai who survived said it was Richard the Lionhearted who paid Sinan to do the deed. Franzius cautioned "[i]t might be remembered however, that fidais' confessions were not noted for their accuracy. Moreover, Montferrat had recently put to death a stranded Assassin, confiscated his property, and had not heeded Sinan's demands for compensation."[13]

The other suspect was Saladin—the warrior Kurd of the Crusades—who was said to have asked Sinan to kill not only Montferrat, but Richard as well. (Saladin had previously threatened to kill Montferrat's father if he didn't turn over Tyre to him; Montferrat's response was that "the old gentleman had already lived long enough."[14]) But Sinan apparently did

not want to touch Richard, which may have helped lead to the rumours that he had something to do with the Marquis's death (and the fact that Richard was said to be on the outs with Montferrat). Others believed Sinan too shrewd to want to kill both, and "while Rashidu'd-Din agreed [with Saladin] in the case of Montferrat, he would take no action against Richard, since he feared that Saladin would become too powerful if both his enemies were killed."[15] Even Arabic sources conflict over who ordered it. One, citing a letter from a Muslim envoy to Montferrat, said that Richard the Lionhearted had done it. Another said they were "renegade Isma'ilis." And another said it was Saladin, naming the price.[16] If it was indeed Saladin who ordered the Marquis's death, then Sinan's shrewdness appeared to have paid off: "Four months after the murder of Conrad a truce was signed between Richard Coeur de Lio and Saladin in which, at Saladin's request, the Assassin territories were included," writes Laurence Lockhart, a Persian scholar.[17]

The Syrian Assassins did not just focus on one side: they liked to hit up both the Christians and the Muslims for murder and money. In fact, the Crusades were probably the best thing to happen to the Assassins, allowing them to play both sides off each other. They saw the religious wars as an "excellent opportunity to fish in troubled waters," according to Lockhart. "[Hassan] immediately despatched [sic] emissaries to Syria who, after gaining many partisans among the Ismailis there and seizing a number of mountain fortresses, established the Syrian branch of the Order."[18] Attempts were said to have been made on Richard's life, after Sinan's death, including one in 1195, allegedly by fifteen people. They were caught and arrested, and confessed they were Assassins hired by Philip Augustus of France. "If these were Fida'is, it is the only known case where a group as large as fifteen was used on one mission," according to Nowell.[19] The reverse rumor also spread: that Richard had called upon Assassins to kill Philip.

On the other side of the Crusades, prior to their alleged arrangement to murder Montferrat, Sinan made at least two attempts to kill Saladin. Both attempts had a Blake Edwardian flavor: while resting alone in his tent in May 1176, Saladin was attacked by one of his bodyguards, who tried to put a knife through his head. Saladin's helmet, it turned out, had chain mail underneath. "The fidai then slashed at the Sultan's throat.

Saladin, a skillful polo player, reached quickly for his wrist and deflected the blade," according to Franzius, as another bodyguard rushed in and grabbed the knife. The Assassin, clearly having an incredibly bad day, was killed, as two other Assassins jumped into the tent, only to be run through by the other guards. Two months later, the second attempt had an Assassin dive-bombing out of a walnut tree at Saladin while he was riding to lay siege to Masyaf, a castle the Syrian Assassins had captured in the 1130s. Franzius writes: "But he landed on the steed's rump, fell to the ground, and was dispatched by Saladin's bodyguards." Coming to the realization that a siege on Masyaf would be too time-consuming when he had other matters on his plate, Saladin appeared to have buried the hatchet—or dagger in this case—with Sinan, agreeing that he "would thereafter avoid Assassin territory, while Sinan would cease endeavoring to send him to the other world."[20]

The end of the Assassins' reign of terror finally came in 1257, at the hands of the notorious Mongol hordes. Mangu, the Great Khan, had heard of the Assassins through a traveler he received in his court, who wore chain mail to protect himself against the Assassins' poison daggers. By 1255, "the Mongols, under Hulaku Khan, the brother of Mangu, were on their way to Persia with strict orders from the Great Khan to exterminate the Assassins before proceeding further west to attack Baghdad and overthrow the 'Abbasid Caliphate.'" The fifty castles soon fell against the hordes. The Syrian branch faded away, "becoming in 1265 tributaries of the Egyptian Sultan Baibars."[21]

Hassan, the first Old Man of the Mountain, and his followers truly were the original terrorists, as Lewis notes. Like a terrorist group we now know well, they too had roots in religion. Napoleon once said religion is good stuff for keeping the common people down. Apparently, it's also good stuff for the fundamentalists to feed on, especially those who believe they'll be martyred and sent to heaven to meet many virgins, or believe that rock and roll is the work of Satan. But back to the mediaeval times, when superstition had a strangle-hold: they were "without precedent—in the planned, systematic and long-term use of terror as a political weapon. The stranglers of Iraq [who came before the Order of Assassins] had been small-scale and random practitioners, rather like the thugs of India, with whom they may be connected. Previous political murders,

however dramatic, were the work of individuals or at best of small groups of plotters limited in both purpose and effect," Lewis writes.[22] Bin Laden and his group of followers, who want to create a "radical Islamic empire that spans from Spain to Indonesia," could be seen as the modern-day equivalent of the original Old Man in the Mountain and his Order of Assassins.[23] Hassan, whom Lewis alternately calls a "revolutionary of genius" and possessing "political genius in perceiving weakness of Islamic monarchies" that could be exploited by terrorism, came more than close to creating such an empire, quite literally a nation of terrorists.[24] "Hasan found a new way, by which a small force, disciplined and devoted, could strike effectively against an overwhelmingly superior enemy. 'Terrorism', says a modern authority, 'is carried on by a narrowly limited organization and is inspired by a sustained program of large-scale objectives in the name of which terror is practiced.' This was the method that Hasan chose—the method, it may well be, he invented."[25]

[1] Franzius, Enno. History of the Order of Assassins. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969.
[2] Laqueur, Walter. A History of Terrorism. Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, NJ: 2001. p. 109.
[3] Saleh, Shakib. "The Use of Batini, Fida'I and Hashishi." Studia Islamica. 82 (1995) 35.
[4] Nowell, Charles E. "The Old Man of the Mountain." Speculum 22 (1947): 511.
[5] Ibid. p. 515.
[6] Lewis, Bernard. "The Sources for the History of the Syrian Assassins." Speculum 27 (1952): 475.
[7] Nowell, Charles E. "The Old Man of the Mountain." Speculum 22 (1947): 505.
[8] Ibid. p. 507.
[9] Ibid. p. 506.
[10] Ibid. p. 502.
[11] There was some infighting between the two branches, too: Sinan, who ruled from his death in 1192, "was originally from the Alamut establishment, but in Syria he grew so powerful that several times the Persian Old Man sent Fida'is to murder him. These attempts failed; some of the dagger-men being killed and others won over," Nowell writes.
[12] Ibid. p. 508-509.
[13] Franzius, Enno. History of the Order of Assassins. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969.
[14] Ibid. p. 118.
[15] Lockhart, Laurence. "Hasan-i-Sabbah and the Assassins." Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies University of London 5 (1930): 686.
[16] Lewis, Bernard. "The Sources for the History of the Syrian Assassins." Speculum 27 (1952): 487-488.
[17] Lewis, Bernard. "Saladin and the Assassins." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London 15 (1953): 244.
[18] Lockhart, Laurence. "Hasan-i-Sabbah and the Assassins." Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies. University of London 5 (1930): 685.
[19] Nowell, Charles E. "The Old Man of the Mountain." Speculum 22 (1947): 510.
[20] Franzius, Enno. History of the Order of Assassins. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969.
[21] Ibid. p. 687-688
[22] Lewis, Bernard. The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam. London: Cox & Wyman, 1967.
[23] Sandalow, Marc. "Bush warns of 'radical Islamic empire.'" San Francisco Chronicle 7 October 2005.
[24] Lewis, Bernard. The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam. London: Cox & Wyman, 1967.
[25] Ibid. p. 130

Nick Fuller Googins

When Panthers Roamed Boston – The Boston Chapter of the Black Panther Party –

The story of the Black Panthers in Boston begins in the summer of 1968—an era where radical change hung thick in the air and when the question on everyone's mind was not "if?" but "when?" Across Africa, the fires of independence and decolonization continued to rage, while in Paris, students and workers brought France to the brink of revolution. Young people in Mexico rose up against their nation's one-party dictatorship, and in the United States urban uprisings and student rebellions swept across the country—worldwide it was a period of popular struggle and resistance. Boston was no different.

By the summer of 1968, Boston had seen years of protests, rallies, sit-ins, boycotts, "freedom schools," and more, organized by the Black community to fight segregation in the public schools and racism in City Hall. Roxbury was still smoldering after the second "riot" within a year, set off by the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. The Boston Black United Front, led in part by current City Councilor Chuck Turner, demanded that all jobs, schools, and government agencies within Boston's Black neighborhoods be controlled directly by the Black community itself. And it was in this atmosphere of community demands, militant tactics, and burning frustration that 375 Blue Hill Avenue in Roxbury became the first office and headquarters for the Boston Chapter of the Black Panther Party.

"We are twenty-four hour revolutionaries dedicated to the needs of black people," exclaimed early Boston Panther leader Delano Farrar. Farrar, like many of the first Boston Panthers, was a Boston-born Northeastern University student and a former member of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)—the national organization responsible for sit-ins, voting drives, and other impressive Civil Rights struggles around the country. Prodded by Stokely Carmichael, who himself had resigned as SNCC chairman to join the Black Panther Party,

many disaffected members of SNCC's Boston chapter quit the organization in 1968 and went on to form the first chapter of the Black Panther Party in Boston.

From their office on Blue Hill Avenue (and later from their second office at 23 Winthrop Street), the first Boston Panthers, many of them still in high school or college, set out to change the world. They modeled themselves around the "Ten-Point Plan," a list of ten demands espoused by the national Black Panther Party that called for such things as free health care, decent housing, full employment and exemption for Black people from the military.

As the original Black Panthers had successfully done in Oakland, the Boston chapter armed themselves and hoped to patrol the "pigs" in an effort to halt police brutality in their own neighborhoods. They also outlined a series of plans that included establishing a free nursery for single, working mothers and a curriculum of "Political Education" for the community.

Using such revolutionary texts as Frantz Fanon's Wretched of the Earth, I Speak Freedom by Kwame Nkrumah, and The Autobiography of Malcolm X, the Boston Black Panther Party offered popular Political Education classes every Thursday evening and Saturday afternoon at Northeastern University and at Blue Hill Avenue. In the words of Farrar, the chapter hoped to "educate black folks to our philosophy and let them see how they are being oppressed by the white man."

Just one year after their arrival on the streets of Boston, however, Delano Farrar, Chico Neblett, Frank Hughes, and the other founding Boston leaders saw their early departure at the hands of those Boston Panthers who believed the struggle for freedom was to be based on *class* rather than just *race*. The clash between the factions came to a head in May of 1969 during a tense meeting at which both parties were fully armed. Don Cox, a top Black Panther officer from Oakland, flew into Boston and officially expelled the original leadership, giving free reign to the handful of Panthers who, like the National office, envisioned the Black Panther Party not just as defender of the Black community, but as leader of a working-class revolution that aimed to bring equality and justice to all of society.

"We were talking socialistic ideas," explained Greg Jones, one of the Boston Panthers who took over after the May expulsions. The reestablished Boston chapter called itself a

Marxist-Leninist organization, believing that capitalism was the real source of poverty, crime, violence, and racism, and holding that only a true socialist revolution could alleviate society's problems. They drew much of their inspiration from Chinese Communist revolutionary Mao Tse-Tung and his Little Red Book that became a constant presence around the Panther's headquarters.

But if the new Panthers could talk the talk, they could also walk the walk. Led initially by Dorchester-native Doug Miranda, but for the most part guided by the tough, energetic leadership of Audrea Jones, the Boston Panthers called themselves "oxen to be ridden by the people" and aimed to put socialism into practice through a number of community programs. Their Free Breakfast Program, established in the Tremont Methodist Church, served around fifty young Black children every morning at six. They also established a Free Clothing Program in the Mission Hill Project and pioneered the "People's News Service"—a free community newspaper created by Boston Panther "Cappy" Pinderhughes and mimicked by other Panther Party chapters across the country.

The Boston chapter's most notable program was the "Franklin Lynch Peoples' Free Health Center," founded in May of 1970. Named after a young Black singer gunned down in bed by a cop inside Boston City Hospital, the Free Health Center was run out of a large trailer on the corner of Whittier Street and Columbus Avenue—land that had been seized by the Boston Redevelopment Authority for a massive interstate highway connection. The Black United Front led "Operation Stop" to halt the BRA highway project and supplied the Boston Panthers with funds to build the Free Health Center in the path of proposed construction. Staffed by volunteers and supplied with donations, the Center offered the Black Community basic health services for free. "This is truly socialism at work because we are moving in a collective manner to solve our collective problems," they explained.

Government repression was a daily reality for the Boston Panthers as it was for Black Panthers across the country. Yet despite the entire weight of the FBI and Boston Police on their shoulders, the young men and women of the Boston Black Panther Party managed to continue their work—getting breakfast ready for fifty hungry boys and girls, selling stacks of

The Black Panther newspaper, staffing the Free Medical Center, giving speeches, holding rallies, and more—a labor-intensive feat undertaken daily by the young men and women from Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, and the South End who simply wanted a more just world for the oppressed and victimized of Boston and elsewhere.

Although the Boston Black Panther has been an endangered species since the mid-1970s (mainly because of intense government repression and ill-advised orders from the Party's Central Committee), the need for a grassroots, popular resistance movement is as urgent now as it was back in the 1960s, if not more so.

And in thinking about working for social justice, it is essential to remember that Delano Farrar, Doug Miranda, "Big Bob" Jones, Audrea Jones and the other Boston Panthers were not superhuman individuals but just everyday young people—students, brothers, daughters, mothers, workers, etc., who were sick of the poverty, police brutality, and racism affecting their community and decided to do something about it. The history of the Panthers in Boston should offer inspiration today, showing each of us the immense power behind working collectively through direct action for a better tomorrow.

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Jes Johnston

Holding Ceausei[1]

Romania
Decree no. 770 / 1966
Patriotic Duty
Of
Women under 45 years:
Deliver five children for your homeland.

In a world where showers are a luxury
and bread costs 13 cents,
a dead pig hangs in the closet
and the smell assaults the pastries.

In this world, I meet babies:
Babies with shaven heads
and deep, hollow eyes,
Their legs and arms are strapped to cribs,
ragged white cloths on rusty bars.
Babies that lock their eyes to my eyes
and rock themselves
back and forth
back and forth
like weeds on a shore
lapped by the waves,
a sea of Babies rocking
back and forth.

One's neck is scarred, (Botched abortion illegal since the decree.)
One's spine is inverted (Birth defect)
One has AIDS, and the nurses are afraid of her.

And I hate those nurses
I hate the smoke that spirals out of their break room.
I hate the smell of their cigarettes and
their phlegmy laughs and their Romanian jabber
that cuts the silence
of this haunting nursery where babies don't cry.

Notes

[1] Ceausei- the name attributed to the babies born in Romania due to the rule of a communist tyrant, Ceausescu. Even after his death, thousands of abandoned children remained homeless or in orphanages.

Intent of Poem

In this nonfiction poem, I wrote about my semester in Romania. I traveled abroad to do social work in Romanian orphanages after the fall of Ceausescu, a dictator who attempted to remove contraceptives and birth control knowledge from the country in order to assemble an army of children. After his reign, the children in these orphanages were in need of medical, emotional and psychological care. I took classes in Romania for a semester and my daily course-work was in Distrovici Orphanage, an orphanage for children up to four years old.

The most haunting memory is of the first time I entered the orphanage and saw a sea of babies who were strapped to their cribs. These babies who lacked care and attention rocked themselves, a symptom of RAD, Reactive Attachment Disorder. Babies stood, grasping the side of their barred cribs, rocking back and forth and staring at me longingly with deep, dark, beautiful eyes. A room of silent, rocking babies. They were silent because the children had learned that their cries would yield no dividends. The most disturbing part of my first day "scene" was that the nurses would neglect to feed and change the babies. They took breaks all day and smoked in the back room, talking and laughing while the babies were strapped to their cribs, hungry and dirty.

The beginning of the poem was an attempt to let readers enter the politics that created this problem. The anagram P.O.W. is an attempt to show how the children of Romania became prisoners, in their cribs, with rag-bonds.

In my host family's "refrigerator"—a room with open windows—a dead, smoked pig hung along with all the other food. The smell and taste of that pig lingered and penetrated the other foods in the closet. I hoped this would be a symbol of how a dead dictator's decisions impacted innocent, beautiful children's lives.

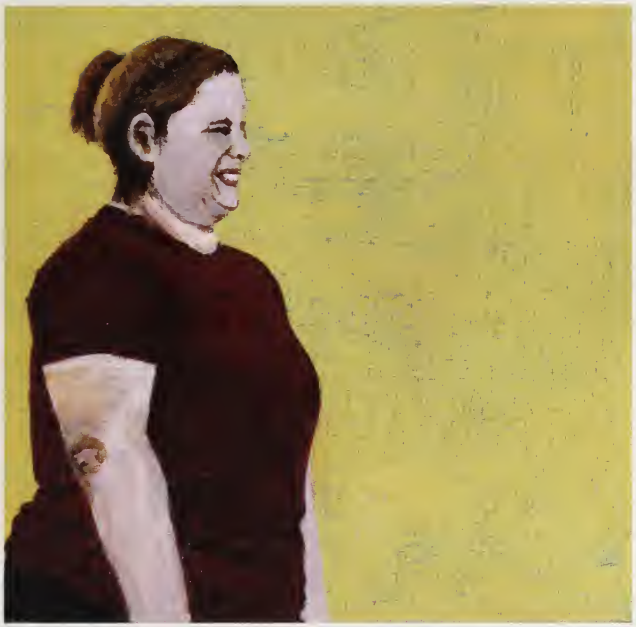
The next sections encapsulated my first day in the Distrovici Orphanage in Sighisoara, Romania—the babies, their ailments, and the nurses.

Marc Coutu
That Attack In The Gut And The Hot Blood
Acrylic on Canvas

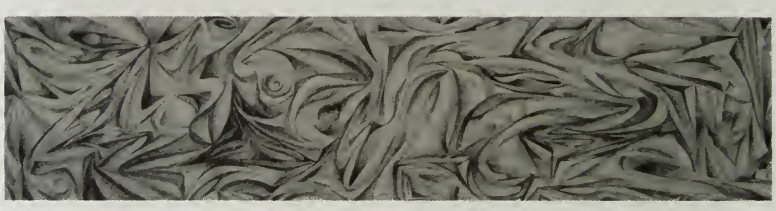
Ying Gong

Bubbles on Hair | *Self Portrait by the Window*

Colored Pencils and Pen | Oil Paint



Skyela Heitz
Cheerleading Practice | *The Play*
Acrylic on Panel 8" x 8"



Neil Horsky
Untitled, 2006 | *Untitled, 2006*
Fountian Pen, 7" x 30" | Watercolor, 12 1/8" x 16 1/8"

Theodora Kamenidis
Broken | *Tree Paths II*
Acrylic on Canvas

Paula Kolek-Maconi
Primary Colors | *Sarah in the Café*
Color Photography

Chris Little
Rock Eyes | *1938 Western Flyer*
Digital Photograph | Photograph

Jon Marino
Verizons Horizon | *Doorway to Knowledge, Oxford*
Photography

Christopher McCarthy
Found Painting #4 (Baptism #1) | *Found Painting #2*
Found Painting #1 | *Arcata Light*
Polaroid 600 Film

Reginald Merome
Self | *Flowers From My Lover*
Color Photography

S. Donovan Mullaney
Leaping
Monoprint on Paper

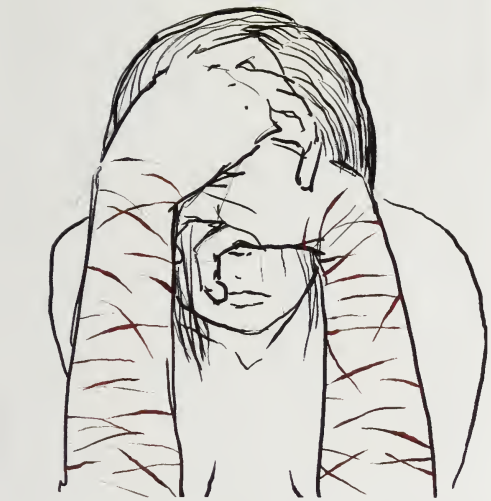
Nima Samimi

Birth, Death and Two Other Seasons | *Eyes*

Digital Prints | Acrylic on Canvas

Taro Sekimoto
Benjie
Acrylic on Canvas

Kate Sheridan
Morning (Self Portrait) | *Untitled*
Digital Media



Paul Sung
scars tell stories | *daddy, no*
Digital Media

Takeo Wakaki
te inspiration | *te love*
Acrylic on Canvas

Angie Melchin
Birdman
Etching/Print/Softground

Michael Grohall

Mississippi

It was a hot summer in Minneapolis the year I turned 21. I was living just at the outskirts of Dinkytown renting a room in a warren of college students, some enrolled, some in limbo. I was straddling, trying to decide which direction my life should be moving. Life away from my home city of Duluth had been treacherous at first; depression, panic, drinking, loneliness, all of the rocks one can smash up against, yet, somehow, I had made my way, found the current at last and was finally starting to enjoy the view. The whole horizon of the world seemed to stretch out in front of me. My long years of deprivation had kept me stunted. At last, I was beginning to grow.

I remember his laugh. At the coffee shop where I often took up long residences, I had seen him moving about as effortlessly as rain on glass. Tall, broad-shouldered, thick hair, he had many of the physical qualities I longed for. I never heard him talking—though he was often sitting with others—I just remember the laughter. No one in my entire family had ever laughed like that. It loosened a knot deep in my gut and I felt unsettled by the feelings it evoked. I knew we could never be friends yet I felt determined to meet. He was the crossroads I was fast approaching. When he was in my vicinity, the atmosphere felt charged like air before a storm. Things even smelled more distinct, clearer—coffee, cigarettes, even he had a smell.

"Have you ever walked out on the railroad trestle?" The bridge in question spanned the Mississippi, dividing Minneapolis from St. Paul. It was 11 o'clock at night, the air humid yet cooling as we walked toward the river. The night sky was cloudless; city lights filled the air and the river. In reality, I had never walked out on this bridge at night nor anytime, yet I replied, "Sure have, several times but only during the day." When we got to the edge of the bridge and stepped onto the tracks he took my hand, right then I closed my eyes, trusting both his guidance and what we were about to do. I left solid ground and we walked out over the water.

We had sex right there on the bridge suspended above the

city and our lives. Excitement and fear imprinted my very cells. The whole time I was convinced a train would come rushing out of nowhere and being so far from shore we would either be killed or be forced to jump into the dark below. Yet I didn't feel afraid. Instead, I felt willing to die for something that suddenly felt so good and so right.

Afterward, he told me the bridge was abandoned, no more trains would cross the river, that we were safe. "Didn't you know that?" he asked. "No," I said, "I still have a lot to learn."

Melissa Kibbe

Living on the Edge: The Effects of Temperate Forest Fragmentation on Bird Diversity, Density, and Nesting Habits

Habitat fragmentation, both natural and human in cause, is a very real phenomenon affecting many animal and plant species. In the temperate forests of North America, forest habitats are fragmented into patches by deforestation for roads (Kuitunen et al. 1998), housing (Kluza et al. 2000), agriculture (Knutson et al. 2003), and logging (Hagan et al. 1997). The result of this fragmentation is that many species of plants and animals are living on smaller, noncontiguous patches of land (Bollinger & Switzer 2002) closer to forest edges than they would had they been left undisturbed (Zipperer 1993). Living on the edge has forced many species to alter their behavior and feeding habits, and has also introduced new threats such as vehicle collision and spread of chemical toxins (Trombulak & Frissell 1999). Forest fragmentation and edge effects have a profound influence on avian life, both directly and indirectly. This review collects a variety of studies indicating forest fragmentation has had and will continue to have a large impact on bird abundance and diversity, nesting habits, reproductive success, and foraging habits, though not always detrimentally (Kluza et al. 1999; Imbeau et al. 2003).

Proximity to roads and housing areas directly affects abundance of bird species. Kuitunen et al. reported that abundance of certain species of birds such as willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), crossbills (*Loxia spp.*), and tree pipit (*Anthus trivialis*) was lower near highways. Yet Trombulak and Frissell note that not all species are affected in the same way by fragmentation. In a study assessing the effects of human land use on bird distribution in forested lake regions of the northeastern United States, Allen and O'Connor found that total bird abundance increased in fragmented areas. This is primarily due to the success of bird species that thrive in fragmented areas; the study found increased abundance of fragmentation-tolerant species and omnivorous species, while abundance of tree-

foraging and neotropical migrant species decreased.

In a study of the effects of housing developments in rural New England on forest birds, Kluza et al. used count surveys and mist-netting techniques to assess bird abundances in three areas with low housing density, and in three areas of moderate housing density. They found that abundances of shrub-nesting and ground birds were greater in areas of low housing density than in moderate-density areas, and that their abundance was positively correlated to ground cover. They also found that birds that tend to occupy forest interiors were significantly less abundant in areas of moderate housing density. Again, however, some species seemed to thrive on edges. In this study, blue jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*), a predator species, were more abundant in moderate density areas. Indeed, avian predators and competitors, such as the common grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*), often increase in abundance as a result of increased edge area (McIntyre 1995).

What causes total abundances of many birds to be lower near edges created by roads and housing? Some birds may simply be avoiding roads and other edges. Studies have shown that presence of roads in forest habitats can modify the behavior of the various resident species, causing some species which are more easily disturbed by roads to place greater distance between themselves and the offending disturbance (Trombulak & Frissel 2000).

Edge avoidance may also be density dependent. Bollinger and Switzer used a numerical approach to model edge effects on nest building in patches of different sizes. In their model, they defined "edge-sensitive" species as those who avoided building their nests near edges, and "edge-insensitive" species as those who did not avoid edges when building their nests. As expected, they found reduced nesting densities on all patch sizes for edge-sensitive species verses edge-insensitive species. Surprisingly, however, when the overall patch density of edge-sensitive species was reduced by half in the model, these species showed decreased nesting near edges. Bollinger and Switzer suggest that edge avoidance may be density dependent, such that edge-sensitive species will be more apt to build their nests near edges if habitat in the inner areas of a patch are already at capacity.

Kluza et al. posit that decreased total edge abundance may be due to nest predators, both mammalian and avian, since

these predators often appear in high densities in edge habitats where their prey is more exposed. Russo and Young studied egg removal at forest reserve edges in both urban and suburban forests near New York City. They found that removal of eggs by predators at these edges was extremely high, with up to 86% of eggs being removed at suburban edges and 64% at urban edges. This suggests that the quality of the edge itself affects predation. Suarez et al. also found effects of edge quality. They looked at the nesting success of the indigo bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) on a variety of habitat edges in forests of southern Illinois. They found that along edges that were abrupt and permanent, such as those found near campgrounds and agricultural areas, nest predation rates were almost twice those along more gradual edges, such as near streams and areas of selective logging, where plant growth and succession is possible. Clutch sizes along more abrupt edges were significantly smaller, where predation rates were higher. Suarez et al. noted that this suggests limited resource availability near edges, or, perhaps, a dominance of younger birds or birds in poorer condition in abrupt edge populations.

Interestingly, this same study found that nest parasitism by the brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) did not vary among different edge types as predation did. However, nest parasitism does have an affect on edge-dwelling birds. Donovan et al. studied the effects of fragmentation on breeding of forest-nesting birds on twenty-eight different plots in both fragmented and contiguous forests in the North American midwest. They found that nest failure, defined by survival of eggs, was significantly higher in fragmented habitats than contiguous habitats for all species studied, and they attributed this primarily to an increase in brood-parasitism by the brown-headed cowbird, as well as increased predation to a lesser degree. They also found that partial nest failure as a result of cowbird parasitism, that is, some host eggs still remaining in the nest, resulted in a decline in number of host species offspring.

Proximity to edge may also promote risk-taking behavior that would otherwise not be present, further exposing bird species to predators. Turcotte and Desrochers conducted a study examining whether trade-offs between foraging and anti-predatory behavior in black-capped chickadees (*Poecile atricapilla*) were affected by deforestation resulting in habitat fragmentation. They placed sunflower seeds on snow-covered

fields near forest edges in twenty four landscapes varying in forest cover, and used maximum distance traveled by flocks for the seeds as a metric for risk-taking behavior. They found that in areas where more deforestation took place, chickadees traveled farther for seeds than those in areas with less deforestation. In half of the landscapes, they made food available for a few weeks prior to the experiment. In areas where food had been made available, chickadees did not venture as far from the forest edge in all regions, independent of deforestation level. Turcotte and Desrochers suggest that deforestation results in an increase in energy stress. Chickadees may have to engage in riskier behavior to meet their energy needs, thereby exposing themselves more often to predators. The result is often increase mortality for those in more deforested regions.

What does all this mean for bird populations in temperate forests? Overall, habitat fragmentation affects the success of different avian species in temperate forests, causing a shift in diversity of species. Villard et al. assert that landscape structure and plant cover predict presence and distribution of bird species. Altering the landscape of temperate forests invariably changes the composition of species that occupy those areas. Hagan et al. studied bird abundance and diversity in nine different categories of industrial forest landscape in northern Maine, ranging from clear-cuts to old-growth forests. They found that the greatest diversity of species occurred in young forest types, and those regenerated regions also had the greatest abundance of bird species. The majority of the birds in these forests were migrant species, while mature softwood forests had greater abundances of resident species. They predicted that abundances of mature-forest species will decrease as logging continues, but that migrant species will benefit from timber harvest. However, they note that few species appear in higher abundances on heterogeneous landscapes. Fragmentation as a result of timber harvesting, then, could have a detrimental affect on total bird abundance and diversity.

Fragmentation can create patches of habitat that are incapable of sustaining bird life. Donovan et al. found that contiguous regions of forest act as source patches for migrant birds species while fragmented patches act as sinks. The three species studied—ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*), red-eyed vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*), and wood thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*)—

experienced total nest failure which is significantly higher in fragmented patches, than in contiguous forest, due to edge effects such as increased parasitism and predation. Donovan et al. used population growth models to assess the continued success of these three species in both contiguous and fragmented patches. They concluded that without immigration, all three species would either decline (wood hhrush) or become extinct (ovenbird and red-eyed vireo) on fragmented patches, indicating that these patches are population sinks. The model predicted that all three species populations occupying contiguous habitats would increase only if no emigration occurs, which suggests that fragmentation affects not only those populations in fragmented patches, but also those occupying contiguous habitats.

The story of habitat fragmentation in temperate forests is a complicated one. While some avian species are detrimentally affected by this phenomenon, others benefit. Roads, agriculture, and other means of fragmentation create more edge habitat, which some species avoid and on which some species thrive. Greater edge area increases predation and nest-parasitism. Yet it has been shown that many variables, including forest types, forest density, overall species density in a given patch, and quality or foraging among other things, all play a key role in shaping the characteristics of life on the edge for temperate forest bird species.

To further complicate this story, Bissonette and Storch are critical of the methods used to study habitat fragmentation. They note that many studies proposing to examine the main effects of habitat fragmentation, such as edge effects and movement between patches, do not always agree, and in fact have sometimes come to conflicting conclusions. They posit that the effects of fragmentation are vast and have many causes, and that current methodology and models tend to oversimplify the phenomenon. Clearly, further study, both observational and experimental, as well as utilization of models, must be done in order to understand this phenomenon.

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Jennifer Hooper
Cone Fish | *Fly Away*
Etching | Photography

Aleksander Kulenovic

Arete and Democracy

What does it mean to be good? What are the various parts of being good? Can it be taught, or is it an innate quality that cannot be taught? If it can be taught, who teaches it? Is it something nearly everyone is competent at teaching, or does it require special expertise? These are some of the questions with which Plato struggles in *The Protagoras.* Through the characters of Socrates and Protagoras, he examines human nature and evaluates the wisdom of democratic government. An analysis of this dialogue can help shed light on the thought process that leads to Plato's conclusions in *The Republic.*

The central debate in *The Protagoras* begins over Hippocrates' desire to study with the sophist Protagoras. Socrates is shocked that Hippocrates would make such a decision without consulting him or anyone else first. He makes an analogy between food vendors and sophists: the former sell goods for the body, the latter for the soul (mind), and just as the food vendor might sell food bad for the body without necessarily knowing any better, Protagoras might sell "food for thought" that is bad for the soul.

Socrates' main point is that Hippocrates should take better care in deciding whom he should trust with his education, but it also implies a malleability in Hippocrates's mind, and presumably the human mind in general. Obviously, we are what we eat. The body, over time, is very much affected by our nutrition. Socrates seems to believe that the mind can likewise be made fit or unfit by consuming good or faulty instruction. A believer in innate goodness might not be so worried about Protagoras' meddling, but in any case Socrates is only making the common-sense argument that Protagoras warrants a closer look.

Socrates and Hippocrates come to ask Protagoras what sort of education he provides, and after Socrates gets Protagoras to give a more specific answer (using a similar progression of questions to the one in *The Gorgias*) Protagoras states that he teaches "good decision-making, whether it's in his personal life...

or in public matters, where the aim is to make him as effective as he can be at handling and debating the affairs of his city" (Plato 13). Socrates interprets this as *politike techne*, or "civic and ethical know-how," (Plato 13 and note 31) and Protagoras agrees that that is exactly what he teaches.

Socrates then makes an argument for why he believes this cannot be taught, but it is important to note that there is a bit of an unusual shift here. Socrates begins by arguing that *politike techne* cannot be taught, and then without a word from Protagoras shifts to using the word *arete* instead, the quality of being good (Plato 14 and note 34). It is not a wholly unnatural shift, given the ethical dimension implicit in what Protagoras claims to teach, but it does steer the discussion away from what we would today call civics or political science, and toward virtue and human nature. At any rate, Protagoras either does not notice the shift or does not mind it.

There are two parts to Socrates' initial argument. First, he argues that when Athenians need advice on a technical aspect of running the city, such as shipbuilding, they'll only accept it from a skilled shipbuilder, and anyone else trying to weigh in would be laughed at and dragged out. On the other hand, when an ethical question comes up and anyone speaks, "no one complains that 'he hasn't learnt these things anywhere; he hasn't had a teacher; and he's trying to tell us what to do!'—obviously because they don't think of this as something people can be taught" (Plato 14). The second part of the argument, in which he begins to talk about *arete*, deals with the problem that great Athenians such as Pericles cannot seem to pass on their virtue to their sons.

Protagoras then makes his Great Speech. In it, he relates a myth that is almost an evolutionary explanation of human society. Similar to the standard Prometheus myth, it tells how humans were given "technical ingenuity" (Plato 16) and fire to compensate for a thoughtless mistake that left them physically disadvantaged. However, this was still not enough to survive animal attacks and the elements, because they could not successfully band together without knowledge of how to treat each other fairly. So, Zeus gave them a sense of ethics, and he gave it to all of them. Having finished with the myth, Protagoras answers Socrates' first question: "... when it comes to discussing how to be *good citizens*, which is entirely a matter of being ethical,

and being sensible, it makes sense for them to accept advice from any man at all, because they assume it's everyone's business to be good *in that way*—or societies couldn't exist at all" (Plato 17).

Next, Protagoras proceeds from a common-sense viewpoint to argue that this ethical sense is something we expect everyone to have. It is generally strange to claim to have knowledge of shipbuilding when we do not, and perfectly normal to admit we don't even know what port and starboard are. On the other hand, it is perfectly normal to claim to have a sense of ethics, and highly unusual to insist that we have no idea what is right and what is wrong. He uses a similar argument for why this is something that is taught:

> There are defects that we think people have because they're born that way, or through bad luck. In those cases, nobody gets angry... Nobody thinks of treating ugly people in any of those ways, for example, or people who are short, or weak... But when it comes to things we think are acquired through effort, and practice, and teaching, this time, if someone is found lacking... then we do respond with anger, and criticism, and punishment. And among those kinds of faults are disregard for what's right, and disrespect for religion, and basically, everything that's the opposite of being a good citizen. (Plato 18)

So far Protagoras has expressed the view that ethics is something almost everyone has, that it can be taught, and that everyone (society) teaches it. How, then, does he justify his own profession? He does this to some extent by answering the second part of Socrates' question, about sons not being as good as their fathers. If *arete* is taught rather than innate, then parents' influence extends only as far as making sure their children are taught as much as possible, as competently as possible. Protagoras' flute analogy makes the case well. In a society that treats flute-playing as an indispensable skill, the son of a great flute-player is bound to learn basic flute-playing like anyone else, but he is no more likely than anyone else to excel unless he happens to have an innate talent or receives special training.

Protagoras does enough switching between concepts of innate quality, teaching, universality, and expertise to be confusing. What he ultimately seems to mean is that there is a minimum standard of arete that everyone is supposed to have, and when they fail to meet it, they must be punished. Beyond that, he implies that there is a higher level that he particularly

teaches, and that parents can send their children to be taught this as they do many other things.

Another somewhat delicate implication is that the parents can have oodles of *arete*, but not be good at *teaching* it. Protagoras has already alluded to this, and the personal danger it involves: "After all, if a man is an outsider... and persuades the very best of the young men in those cities to give up spending their time with anyone else, family or friends... and to spend their time with him alone, so as to better themselves under his influence... it can cause a lot of resentment, and hostility, and ill-will" (Plato 11). Anytus' angry reaction in *The Meno* to an identical question (why do so many "great" men seem to have trouble passing their virtue on to their children?) is an example of this hostility. Both are clear allusions to Socrates later being charged with corrupting the young.

Socrates, however, claims to accept pretty much everything Protagoras has said, and instead comes up with a whole new breed of questions. He notes that Protagoras has used a number of different words in his speech interchangeably, and wonders if Protagoras thinks they are all the same things as *arete*, or parts of it. This bit of the dialogue is a typical example of dialectic, and it covers some important territory.

When Socrates essentially asks Protagoras to clarify his use of various terms, he is clearly ready to turn to a definition-oriented phase of the dialectic. He seeks to clear up the ambiguities in Protagoras' speech, though in "Purpose of the Protagoras," Micheal Gagarin rightly notes that Protagoras' answers were no more vague than Socrates' questions (Gagarin 142). Gagarin says that what Socrates does is to "shift the consideration of arete from a sociological plane to an ontological one" (Gagarin 145). In other words, the discussion has turned from an attempt to feel out the role of *arete* (loosely defined) in society to an attempt to pin down what *it* (clearly defined) *actually is*; the question that Socrates is really interested in answering first: "...and if I don't know what [being good] is, how on earth am I supposed to know what *kind* of thing it is?" [Meno 145]).

The initial back-and-forth outlines a few basic theories of *arete*. Firstly, are concepts such as respect for what's right (*dikaiosune*, Plato note 51), piety, wisdom and courage all parts of *arete*, or synonymous with it? Protagoras replies that they are parts. And secondly, are these parts qualities of *arete*, or distinct

parts with their own roles, like the parts of the face (Plato 27)? The latter. Lastly, are they—like the parts of the face—completely different from each other in both form and function? Protagoras' initial answer is yes, at which point Socrates begins confronting him with the resultant contradictions. When the discussion resumes (after an interruption during which they argue about method, and then analyze the song of Simonides), Protagoras amends his answer and says that the different parts are all related and similar in some ways, but that courage is different because a person can have courage and yet lack all the other parts of being good (Plato 59).

This is the point at which Socrates feels he has a foothold in trying to determine the role of knowledge in *arete*. Unlike Protagoras, who feels no need to define *arete* in his Great Speech in order to say whether it is teachable or not, Socrates is compelled, as in *The Meno*, to get some ontological footing first. The only way to show that *arete* is teachable is to show that it is a form of knowledge, that it consists of a number of required qualities, all of which are also forms of knowledge, and that they always appear together, like the parts of the face; "The virtues form a unity, according to this view, in that the possession of any one of them guarantees possession of all the rest: unity is understood as *inseperability*" (Devereaux, 766). Protagoras' assertion that a person can be brave without being good challenges this schema, and if Socrates can disprove it, he can be fairly confident in claiming that *arete* is knowledge. Whether or not Socrates' proof, which involves his hedonistic argument, is entirely valid is irrelevant to this analysis. The important thing is that in the end, he and Protagoras agree that courage too is a form of knowledge, and by extension *arete* itself. They also agree that knowledge is the most powerful determinant of human behavior (Plato 63).

To summarize, Socrates and Protagoras have determined the following: i) *arete* is composed of a number of qualities, all of which—though they are not synonymous—appear together and depend on knowledge; ii) knowledge cannot be overpowered by any impulse, so giving in to a bad impulse indicates a lack of knowledge; iii) some level of *arete* is known by almost everyone, and everyone teaches it in order for civilization to exist. iv) Being bad is a result of lack of knowledge; v) it is possible to teach someone to be perfectly good (the central point of the song of

Simonides is wrong).

This last conclusion is the most important for Plato. Without it, *The Republic* makes no sense. In fact, keeping *The Republic* in mind, it becomes obvious that Plato never tries to refute Protagoras' claim there can be special teachers of *arete* (in contrast to *The Gorgias*, where he plainly does try to show that Gorgias' discipline is a waste of time). Rather, he tries to take it to a level that Protagoras doesn't.

Protagoras' Great Speech emphasizes the universality of *arete*, and promotes democracy as making sense, since everyone is reasonably knowledgeable about matters of right and wrong. Protagoras simply claims to produce better people than society does naturally, and would improve students such as Hippocrates in this way. Plato, on the other hand, prefers a stricter definition of "moral expert," and in the part where Socrates talks about people being ridiculed and hauled away for amateurishly speaking up on technical matters, it is easy to imagine that this is what Plato wishes would happen to people who amateurishly speak out on moral matters as well. In Plato's view, democracy makes no sense because the masses cannot possibly be educated to the level necessary for their knowledge to overcome their irrational impulses. There simply aren't enough Protagorases to go around. A far more logical course of action is to teach *one* person to be *perfectly* good. This person's knowledge would be so extensive that he would never act out of ignorance and could do no wrong. With this idea, we see the origin of the philosopher-king.

There are other consequences to these conclusions beyond the question of who should rule, all of which are expressed in *The Republic*. If *arete* is knowledge, if it is not innate, then human nature, particularly in childhood, is very malleable. Add to this a perfectly good ruler, and it makes sense that the State should take over the business of teaching basic *arete*—no more of this "everyone teaches it" nonsense. This is one of the reasons Plato elects to eliminate the family. *Arete* must be taught properly by those who know it best. It is also why he advocates careful censorship of Homer, because *The Iliad* involves instances of both Gods' and heroes' petty squabbling, and "anything that [a young person] receives into his mind at that age is likely to become indelible and unalterable; and therefore it is most important that the tales which the young first hear should be models of virtuous

thoughts" (*Republic II*, 376d).

Democracy is a system of government that relies on two twin premises: i) that people are basically good, if flawed, and that by discussing their views and then casting a vote, they will usually come to the right decision, and ii) that monarchs have the same human flaws as everyone else. The first premise is exemplified by Rousseau's *General Will*, which says that—all things being equal—the aggregate of the choices of free and informed people will always be good. The second was used by John Locke to indirectly refute many of Hobbes' absolutist arguments. Plato does not believe the first premise, and so he doesn't want to believe the second either. *The Protagoras* is not an attack on Protagoras' career (as *The Gorgias* seems to be on Gorgias'). It is an attack on Protagoras' belief in democracy. The theory of *arete* laid out here is applied in *The Republic* to describe the training of the perfect ruler and the design of Plato's utopian society.

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Michael C. Metzger

Gods: An Evolving Perception From Deity To Humanity

The Egyptian world was one of powerfully divine gods, many of which received numerous monuments and statues dedicated in their honor. A world away the Romans celebrated a unique pageantry of gods, who like their Egyptian counter parts were worshiped with equally impressive monuments and statues. The iconic figures from these two periods represent a fundamental difference in the way both Egyptians and Romans interacted with their gods. The difference is exemplified by the Egyptian *Statue of Osiris*, and the Roman *Statue of Eros*, both currently on display at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

The *Statue of Osiris* is from the Late Period of Egyptian history, Dynasty Twenty-Six, dated from around 664 to 525 BCE.[1] The statue is made of greywacke, which is composed of quartz, orthoclase and plagioclase, with fragments of rocks such as felsite, chert, and slate.[2] The colors of the piece can range from grey to a dark greenish grey.

The statue has had a remarkable journey, beginning when it was separated into two pieces just below the figure's knee caps at some point in time unknown to scholars. The unification of the piece began in Giza. In 1798 during a campaign of Jean Duc de Montebello, a Napoleonic General, the bottom half of the statue, the base (Section 3 of Image 1), was found.[3] The top half of the piece (Section 1 of Image 1) was excavated from Giza in April of 1928 by a Harvard University and Museum of Fine Arts expedition. In 1929 it was assigned to the Museum of Fine Arts by the government of Egypt.[4]

In 2000 the Museum of Fine Arts discovered the base, which had been passed down through a French family. The final stage in bringing the two pieces together was to restore the lower legs from knees to ankles (Section 2 of Image 1). Today the restored statue is on display in the Egyptian Funerary Arts Gallery and stands approximately 30 inches in height.[5]

Overall the piece is rigid and expresses little emotion. There

is some detail in the face of the figure, though for the most part the figure has been simplified to blocky forms. The figure is standing upright and has a triangular feel to the upper torso. This may be because Osiris, ruler of the dead, is often depicted in his mummified state. If the figure is fully wrapped that would explain the bulky feeling of the piece, why there are no details to the feet, and why the hands appear to protrude from slits in the garment the figure is wearing. This can clearly be seen in a modern reproduction of an Osiris figure (see Image 1).[6]

The figure is wearing the atef crown which combined the bowling pin crown of upper Egypt with what appears to be two feather-like plumes on either side. The left plume was damaged at some point and is displayed with no restoration. Also on the crown is a *uraei*. To represent kingship the figure is also shown with the "fake" beard, which like the left plume is chipped. Below Orsiris's head is a bit of ornamentation in the form of necklaces of some kind.

Another example of the figure communicating leadership is the crook and flail which the figure holds in his left and right hands respectively. Below his arms is little decoration, though there are hints of what lies beneath the wrappings around his knees. It is important to note that most of this area was restored during the reunification. Below the very simplistic feet of the figure is a base with two horizontal lines of hieroglyphic text.

Moving to the Roman example, this *Statue of Eros* was carved around 190 CE, during the Imperial period of Roman history. Carved from marble most likely from the Greek island of Paros, the statue stands just under 25 inches in height.[13] The surface of the statue is in very good condition with most of the polish remaining, as well as traces of yellow patina, with the right wrist marked by iron stains.

The facial features are very soft and the figure is not bulky like many male statues from this period, which overall gives the figure a boyish tone. The face is virtually undamaged, and an examination shows it to be lacking emotion. Some of the tips of the figure's curly hair have broken off over time; though what remains is a clear example of the amazing detail the piece was carved with.

The figure's left wing is almost entirely intact, unlike the right wing which, like the hair, was damaged and not restored. The wings, also like the hair, are carved with impressive detail,

giving them a feathery texture.

The right arm is intact, excluding the figure's hand. According to the MFA, the hand "was made separately and joined with an iron dowel, which remains in the center of the wrist."[8] On the figure's left side the forearm and hand are both missing.

The torso is almost entirely intact and has survived virtually undamaged. A clear interest in athleticism is displayed, as well as an interest in realism. The torso's muscle groups are not absolutely defined; rather, they flow into one another as they would naturally. Overall the piece seems to be done in a realistic cannon of proportions with no area of the body exaggerated or disproportionate to another.

The right arm support has been lost, though one can see where it would have been just above right hip. On the left side the support remains and, like the wrist, is stained by the iron dowel within the wrist.

Continuing down the piece, both legs are intact up to the knee caps. Like many great Roman works this one displays *contrappasto.* This figure's weight is upon his left leg which frees up his right leg. This weight shift enables the composition to be very realistic, as no person stands perfectly erect with weight evenly distributed to both legs. To the right of the figure's left knee most of the quiver, lower part of the tree-trunk support, and the plinth are missing.[7] The statue itself was inspired by a fourth century sculpture carved by the famous Greek sculptor, Praxiteles.[9] This Greek influence explains the figure's athletic tone.

The objects are similar in scale, Osiris being just a few inches taller than Eros. It is most likely that these objects were designed for personal use: Osiris most likely for an individual burial, as he is the Ruler of the Egyptian Under World; Eros, bearing in mind that it was a Greek copy, could have been used in a domestic or religious (mystery cult) setting, or a combination of both.

Besides the obvious gap in time between the creation of the two pieces, these two images represent two fundamentally different relationships Egyptians and Romans had with their gods. In Egyptian times gods were supreme super-human figures. Osiris, one of their chief gods, was known by a number of titles. One such title, *Wennefer,* means "eternally

incorruptible."[10] Besides not having human flaws or vices, it was also believed that "[h]e [could] not ... suffer any decay in death."[11] Cleary an everyday Egyptian could not personally relate to an eternally incorruptible god who was incapable of decay in death. Egyptian gods functioned rather as distant divine figures who were to be prayed to and worshiped.

The idealization present in the Egyptian period is an element which is hard to find during the Roman era. The Roman gods were personal, with human characteristics and woes. Eros, also known as Cupid, was no exception. According to Lorinda Munson Bryant: "[i]t is said Venus...complained to the goddess of law, Themis, that her little son Cupid was always a child. Themis answered that Cupid was lonesome and needed a brother to play with."[12] Having these flaws and desires enabled Romans to move beyond a distant divine relationship with their gods.

This relationship could explain why Romans were so resistant to early Christianity. During the infant stages of the movement many Romans were turned off by the idea of replacing of their beloved human-like gods with a distant super-human divine figure.

The basic difference in how gods were viewed by the Egyptians and the Romans is naturally reflected in the images of their gods. This difference is exemplified by the two images studied in this analysis. A side by side examination reveals the *Statue of Osiris* communicates strength as well as stability in a super-human manner. The *Statue of Eros* transmits an unsure and distracted tone with a human flare.

The artists of these figures made two different artistic choices to communicate these subtle themes. Osiris is an idealized portrait. His facial features are generic, the figure is rigid and lacks the definition of common bodily features such as biceps, or for that matter a clear torso. In addition, the lack of an animated pose and realism communicates distance from the human world, and impersonal nature. This reflects the Egyptian attitude of separating gods from everyday life.

The Roman artist made the exact opposite selection. Though Eros's face lacks clear emotional expression, the line of the sculpture sends a message of lonliness across to the viewer, as his body seems to fold into itself. The artist achieved this by dropping the figure's head and giving him a distracted gaze. In

addition, the figure more closely represents the human body. The depiction of a god engaging in human emotions as well as a realistic human-like figure allows the viewer to have a more personal and connected interaction with the god, an idea that would be foreign to the Egyptians.

A key difference between the two is the material and the carving of it. For Osiris, the figure was carved from greywacke, a very hard material. Eros was carved from marble, a softer stone. Immediately, the viewer starts to associate Osiris with strength thanks to his hard material and Eros receives a weaker impression because of his weaker material. What sells the presence or lack of strength is the way the artist carved the figure. Osiris was attached to the block he was carved from, creating a link with the stable rock, which leads the viewer to make the logical connection to the ruler being stable as well. Eros is almost entirely freestanding neglecting the needed supports to ensure that the figure would stand. This allows the viewer to move entirely around it. Without the "block" to support the figure, what remains is a seemingly lost figure gazing off into the distance in an expansive void of space.

Both of these images are visualizations of the way the people who celebrated them interacted with them. Egyptians had a distant relationship with their gods, while Romans had a more personal interaction. Setting these differences aside, both pieces are masterful representations of their particular moments in time.

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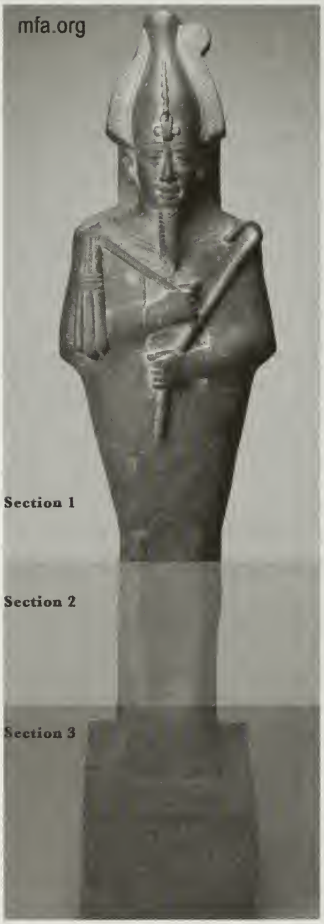

Image 1

Image 2

Oscar Yepes
Hope
Photography

Sabeen Sidiqui

Global Rape

No term better symbolizes the forces directing the course of international relations than "Globalization." We live in a global society, increasingly interconnected by an ever more complex web of communication devices, economies, budding technologies, and other factors pushing us towards mutual dependence. Thus, there seems to be no denying the term's relevance. And despite many people's wish that it was not the case, Globalization exists and it is not going anywhere. All one can hope to do is understand and help manage it so that the system of capitalism inherent in Globalization becomes a tool for people to prosper. While Yergin and Stanislaw, in The Commanding Heights: The Battle for the World Economy, present many standards for judging Globalization, two are the most pertinent to explaining the entangling, incestuous effects thereof: "Securing the Environment" and "Upholding Identity."

It is important to understand how the last fifty years have shaped the world in ways that separated markets from governments in order to identify interconnected economies as the conclusive future or part of a cycle of ideologies. After World War II, the broken countries of Europe brought about two conflicting economic ideas in their pursuit of stabilization: those of Keynes and Hayek. The British Keynes is the father of the macroeconomics. He established the ideas of GDP and inflation and unemployment rates that determine the worth of living. He was disgusted by the Allies' effort after the first World War to suck up the remaining resources of an already bankrupt Germany, and predicted retaliation. Keynes concluded that for a country to be successful it must keep its market in the hands of the government, and control prices and wages. This would allow little inflation and keep unemployment low. On the other hand, the Austrian Hayek based his program on observations on the Soviet Union and came to the opposite conclusion. He stated that too much government power destroys freedom and turns people into slaves, which lead to totalitarianism. He said that Democracy was impossible without a free economy. However,

at a time when the Soviet Union was a military and industrial giant, countries followed the ideas of Keynes, where scientific socialism was safe. These conflicting ideas defined the post war world.

Countries felt that they should pool resources in order to survive. Great Britain was the premiere example of the welfare states which emerged in Europe after the war. Private and National Interests were mixed allowing for trade union rights, education, and healthcare. Coal, rail, and steel, what Lenin had deemed the commanding heights; were owned by the government. However, in the 1970s, an era of "stagflation" occurred, where inflation and unemployment rose despite the predictions of Keynsian economics. Western countries hit a recession so devastating that strikes became an everyday norm. Farmers in America actually drowned chickens in order to create shortages in the stalled economy. Reacting to the failing Soviet system of communism, revolutionary leaders such as Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan called for free markets turning from their socialized mixed economies. They followed the ideas of Hayek, and later Milton Freidman, and ended the stalemate. "Reaganomics" became the new way of conducting an economy, which included sound money, deregulation, modest tax reform, and less government spending.

Latin America was in an era of economic decline, and although reformed from utter collapse, it is not stable even today with a free market. One example was Bolivia, where inflation was rising one percent every ten minutes. The government was simply printing more and more money and spending thirty times what was available. "Dependency Theory" was designed to make countries self sufficient by limiting imports. However, in the case of Latin America in the second half the century, this practice was limiting technological growth. American economists introduced "Shock Therapy" which slashed government spending, import tariffs, and price controls. Similar reforms in Argentina and the Chicago Boys of Chile salvaged Latin America and launched it into an era of maladjusted symbiosis with the Global North.

Eastern Europe attempted to follow suit with Latin America. However, as Gorbachev said, "no country can repeat the reforms of another country." Poland rewrote its plan literally overnight, basing its success on the price of eggs. Once central

planning was demolished, the prices of goods doubled. However, when the farmers were forced to drop their prices, the laws of supply and demand took over. Soon, entrepreneurship was in place. Revolutions were overtaking all of Eastern Europe. Gorbachev did nothing to stop them or the free elections. The U.S.S.R had disintegrated and Russia attempted to privatize; the capitalist system had officially won. People were on the streets selling goods instantly after the fall; seventy five years of communism had not killed the entrepreneurial spirit.

Even Asian economies were prospering from loans and cities began to pop up everywhere in the Southeastern division. India gave up on central planning when the growth rate hit zero and opened it's markets as well. Japan's closed society which had been the reason for it's success now led to its downfall because of lack of change. China remained communist in politics, though with economic socialism. Don Xiaoping, the former leader of China, decided that he could either, "distribute poverty or distribute wealth." The power however had to remain with the government by any means necessary.

Socialism, which had once saved the world from collapse, was now an antiquated system, Marxism completely forgotten. There was no point in redistributing wealth; one needed to create new wealth. With Bill Clinton in office in America, opening up the world's economy, free trade had become unstoppable. The resulting positive and negative effects of Globalization were underway. The premises for the future global economy had become the following. First and foremost was that free trade contributed to economic growth, and trade protection reduced prosperity in the long run. The future would depend heavily on the rules the leading economic powers chose to support to govern trade and monetary policy. The choices are between the contrasting philosophies of commercial liberalism without burdensome regulation and neomercantilist approaches which seek protectionism. The position of the globe's largest economy, the United States, will likely remain pivotal in the equation, since how the hegemon makes economic policy will influence the direction in which other's trade and monetary policies are likely to move. The activities of powerful and wealthy Multi National Corporations's in foreign investment and trade will also increasingly determine economic flows; these activities and pressure for continuing trade liberalization

are multiplying beyond the control of state government, whose sovereign power is eroding. Nonstate commercial and monetary actors will provide much of the shock absorption to keep the global trade running. Finally, Globalization is likely to accelerate, and, as competition expands wealth and reduces the costs of both products and labor, the economic fate of the globe's six billion people will be tied together in increasingly interdependent ways, making the welfare of any one country important to the welfare of all (Kegley, 304-349).

The Commanding Heights outlines five major issues of Globalization. In my opinion, points 3 and 5 ("Securing the Environment" and "Upholding Identity") are more significant factors of Globalization than points 1, 2, and 4 ("Delivering the Goods," "Ensuring Fairness," "Coping with Demographics?"). "Securing the Environment" is problem exponentially exacerbated due to Globalization, and it is irreversible. Point 5 is also relevant because the westernization of countries and loss of sovereign nations means an irrecoverable sense of identity.

A contrast can be made between free trade and sustainable development which is the goal of many practical environmentalists. Liberal economic theory argues that if all states specialize in free trade, a new wealth will promote the means to address the environmental costs of the past. However, the focus on profits and production ignores hidden social and environmental costs which ultimately make us poorer, not richer. Furthermore, liberal economists see these threats as market distortions, impeding the advancement of the people. On the other hand, this can be seen as an instrument for correcting market failure in the area of very obvious environmental exploitation. One example is the atmospheric pollution caused by chemical companies.

Proponents of Globalization argue that this is simply a way to restrict free trade for the Global South, who view this as another manipulative tactic that rich states use to block entry into lucrative Global North markets. The argument against environmentalism is that it is an attempt to keep the world's poor permanently disadvantaged. However, in principle, the goals of both the opposing viewpoints are to simply promote human well-being. Trade encourages states to live beyond their means. Trade magnifies the ecological effects of consumption and production by expanding the market for commodities beyond

state borders. Also, countries can simply protect their own resources by exploiting others'. The profits of MNC's conflict with the air, water, and animals we depend on and have reached no proper resolution. In effect, globalization is raping Mother Earth (Kegley, 353-397).

The other serious issue is one of "Upholding Identity." As communications increase to the speed of milliseconds, time zones are becoming more important than borders. Cultures are combining to become one. Diversity of thought is being lost. Transgovernmental regulation is causing laws and customs of one country to fall into another. Courts all over the world have begun to cite the United States Supreme Court in decisions.

Communication is important for human progress, especially in the information age. There is an assumption with the Democratic Peace Theory that a globe coming together can eliminate war. Military intelligence means greater security in this scientific arena. However, these advantages shouldn't be at the sacrifice of age old cultures and unproductive practices (Wriston).

One of the side effects is the current terrorism of the Western mode of thinking. There is no moral justification for one way of life being better than another. Yet this is the constant conclusion that arises whether on the American side or not. Information dominance also becomes a problem where certain cultures are instantly undermined for their lack of ability or resources in accessing the new technologies. As we become one world, creativity stagnates. The differences between countries make for unfair jurisdiction in court trials. Military security has already created a hegemon with uneven power struggles. The example of this being the Kyoto Protocol which cannot be successful because of the lack of one country. Also, diminishing states are left to the mercy or wrath of the MNC's. As shown by Japan's economy, there is no choice but to modernize (Slaughter).

Natural human tendency is to minimize risk and maximize return. Although Globalization is a grand culmination that has emerged as the pinnacle of human progress, the idea that there is no control over a free market can lead to a great amount of devastation, much of which can never be reversed. Russia managed to survive communism at the cost of 24 million people. Germany launched a world war after it was assaulted. This was no accident. Hernando de Soto has predicted similar

outcomes for Latin America. More powerful countries are easily able to take advantage of less developed countries and leave them permanently scarred, whether by loss of culture or loss of environment. And while Globalization is not in itself an evil force, it possesses the inherent possibility of evil consequences over which there can be no absolute control.

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but wait, there's more

An Interview with Joyce Peseroff

By Deborah Pfeiffer

Joyce Peseroff is an award-winning poet who has written four books of poetry: *The Hardness Scale*, *A Dog in the Lifeboat*, *Mortal Education* and, most recently, *Eastern Mountain Time*. She is editor of three collections: *Robert Bly: When Sleepers Awake*, *The Ploughshares Poetry Reader* and *Simply Lasting: Writers on Jane Kenyon*. Her work has appeared in *Agni*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Barrow Street*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review* and *Provincetown Arts*, to name a few. She was the managing editor of *Ploughshares* for many years, and is still an advising editor for the magazine. She has received fellowships from the Massachusetts Artists Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, and was awarded a Pushcart Prize. A New York City native, she received her MFA from the University of California at Irvine, and currently teaches at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, where she will head the Creative Writing Department starting in July 2006.

UMass Boston Masters student Deborah Pfeiffer spoke with Joyce about her work.

DP: Joyce, what are some of the things young writers might learn from your new collection: *Simply Lasting: Writers on Jane Kenyon*?

Peseroff: In a 1989 interview, Jane answered a question about her status as "junior poet" in a household that included her husband Donald Hall, saying: "...Don is at the point in his career where he's getting to be thought of as quite a statesman of poetry, someone with a lot of answers. And he is someone with a lot of answers. He knows things nobody else knows. But I also know things nobody else knows. It's funny how everything in your life, every experience, everything in your reading, everything in your thinking, in your spiritual life—you bring it all to your work when you sit down to write. And he knows what

he knows and I know what I know..." I think it's important for everybody to ask: What do I know that nobody else knows? I'm not just talking about subjects, or about personal experience. There are things that you hear that nobody else hears, and ways of putting those sounds together. There are ways of saying things no one else has discovered. The way you're going to find that, of course, is by reading a lot of other poets and by exposing yourself to a lot of different sounds.

DP: Donald Hall wrote of you, Jane and Alice Mattison: "...this three-part friendship was essential to Jane's poetry." Is Jane still a part of your poetry?

Peseroff: I'll read her poems when I'm looking for language, looking for an approach...looking for a way into a particular feeling. It's almost a, "What would Jane do?" sort of thing...how would she approach it. She had such a marvelous vocabulary in the natural world...sometimes, after the first draft—not yet looking for precision everywhere, but rhythms and sounds—I will think about her. Jane isn't the only person, of course, but she'll always be one of them. I always show my students the DVD she and Don made with Bill Moyers, *A Life Together...* Immediately after her death, I couldn't watch it. But now it's a comfort to hear her voice, though she's not here. Her poems endure, and so much of her remains in these poems.

DP: How did you come to edit *Simply Lasting*?

Peseroff: *Graywolf Press* asked me to put the collection together. I knew a lot about Jane's work, and how it appealed to people beyond poetry's traditional audience. I knew that some poems like "Let Evening Come" were read in church, but not that her poetry was used by therapists to talk about grief and the grieving process. One nurse used Jane's poems in a paper presented at a conference on hospice. So Jane's literary influence continues in ways that I didn't know before researching the book.

DP: You also have a new book of poetry: *Eastern Mountain Time* just came out in January. I've been to your readings in the past and there's always a line of people waiting to talk to you. What are some of the things people ask you?

Peseroff: Once after I read "Killings," a few people came up to explain how they kill chickens.

DP: (laughs) How to kill chickens?

Peseroff: I read in the newspaper how governments are going to need chicken slaughterers to deal with all these birds getting sick with avian flu. You never know when you write...(laughs) but we're all killers, aren't we? My daughter's high school class read *Fast Food Nation*, which discusses how food is produced in this country—almost all of the kids became vegetarian after that. So I was thinking about the morality...if you're going to eat meat, shouldn't you be willing to deal with the gory details? But what would I do? Would I give up beef? Probably. I don't know about chicken. So that's where it started...speculation.

DP: That reminds me of the first line of the last poem, "Work of the Imagination:" "A wounded mouse—no, a fallen leaf..."

Peseroff: After I read this poem, a woman told me that whenever she saw something skittering across the road like that she worried that she would hit it...it's important to mention that empathy.

DP: You write about life feeding on life in the last poem of *Mortal Education*. *Eastern Mountain Time* appears five years later, as if it grew out of the last lines of this poem. Was that planned?

Peseroff: Some poets start with an idea for a book and then write poems for that book...but I'm much more of a woolgatherer. I never know where I'm going to go next. The two books do share a lot of territory. *Mortal Education* is built around elegy. Both my parents died in the interval between *Mortal Education* and *Eastern Mountain Time*, so I spent a lot of time thinking about how not to repeat myself when, in a lot of ways, my concern—mortality—is the same. These eternal mountains—that's where the title comes from—mountains seem eternal, though they're also subject to time; they erode and collapse. But the scale is so different. Life is precious. How do we think about that?

DP: On the cover, of course, is that wonderful picture of the Old Man in the Mountain.

Peseroff: Yes. And now it's gone. *Natural Light* is an elegy, but the "you" addressed goes through changes...there's a series of incarnations: first the bird, then the peach tree, and all of a sudden, peaches. Transformation: the world made otherwise... but then we're always facing the terms of the orchard, chewed to death by mice the owls fatten on...and the dog's ashes are sifted on the daffodils.

DP: Nourishing the daffodils?

Peseroff: Yes. Nourishing the daffodils. That's my third transformation.

DP: This poem, *Natural Light*, is one of my favorites. Something almost leaps from underground into the peach tree...

Peseroff: Life is an ungovernable force that takes everything. It's something that exists through us and is more important than the individual. That's the great paradox: how do you exist as an expression of a force that doesn't care about you?

DP: Gail Mazur writes, "Musical, contemplative, often wry, Joyce Peseroff's rueful quietude can be fractured by a bravura wit..."

Peseroff: I do think there are some funny poems in this book. *Mortal Education* was pretty sober. I'm glad to get some humor back. Humor...and, going back to the last poem, "Work of the Imagination" there is movement, I think, toward becoming reconciled with the world. And there is hope in the end: three generations—the mother and father dancing, the speaker, the daughter gathering the horses—there's continuity, along with imagination...and I was happy that the last word in the book was "love"...happy that it came out that way.

Killings

I think I could kill a chicken.

I don't know about a cow or a sheep,
goat, turkey, or goose.

I've stunned fish, boiled lobsters,
imagined being asked to "throw the switch"
on a child's murderer.

Mosquitoes I've clapped
with pleasure, my palms bloody.

I don't think I'd kill a chicken with pleasure.

What would I feel if I pressed
the syringe's lethal plunger?

The Shogun's Laws of Compassion
disemboweled anyone who'd neglect or hurt a dog,
almost four thousand men in 1687.

In André's story, a father guns down the punk who shot
his son; he hides the corpse in deep woods.
It takes hours to bury the body.

Would I strangle the chicken, slit its throat,
use an axe?

Once I chopped a milk snake with a hoe.

A lobster can sense
minute changes in water temperature.

I've pulled a four-pound salmon
gasping over the gunwale of my aluminum
canoe, its rose-stipple flinch

the brightest thing I've killed.

A Work of the Imagination

A wounded mouse—no, fallen leaf
staggers across blacktop, into the private
snowstorm Purity Spring Resort is gunning
in time for its "Woodchopper's Ball,"

named for the signature number
of Woody Herman's orchestra, hosted
here for actual loggers. Limbs waggle
in the wind's see-saw. I'm driving

south—it's black at six, ditch water
nearly ice, a thickening ooze of pearl
forming in headlights. Last year, at four,
the school secretary walked into my class

with news—call your sister. Next day we flew
to our mother's empty house. Tonight I lit
a candle at sunset for her, horizon a ruby
scarf she'd never wear. Listening to

Woody on the radio—so many nodding,
fingers popping to the music, since the hour
it was written!—I ask her and my father
to dance, as they used to, in the candle's shine

miles behind. My daughter waits for me
after haltering a dozen hungry mares, walking
them, paddock to stall, and measuring each
fussy ration. She does the work she loves.

Duncan Nelson: UMass Boston's Poet Laureate

Just under forty years ago English Department Professor Duncan Nelson commissioned himself—having cut his teeth on Gilbert and Sullivan and Ogden Nash—as UMass Boston's Poet Laureate, beginning with a poem (one of those featured here) published in the Globe urging that our campus be kept in its downtown Arlington Street location.

Since then he has written over one thousand "occasional" UMB poems, celebrating everything from the opening of the JFK Library to the opening of the UMB Pub; from the Clark Athletic Center groundbreaking to the dockside christening of the"R/V John F. Looney Jr.;" from the arrivals to the departures of trustees, chancellors, provosts, deans, faculty, and staff; from Convocations to Graduations; from Student Leadership Luncheons to Faculty Appreciation Dinners. His mantra is

> To make your occasion one to glory at
> Take me as your Poet Laureate!

It is our pleasure to offer this retrospective of Duncan's work for the UMass Boston community.

A Note from Duncan:

I am deeply touched that The Watermark, a publication that just keeps better and better (and was always very good), has granted me so generous a hearing. I like to think that this is because my poetry catches the extraordinary character of this University—its outreach, its resourcefulness, its resonance.

Thank you, in all senses, for your "attendance"!

Duncan Nelson

Rememb'ring "Things Past" When The Charter Class Was First UMassed Down At Boston Gas!

Preamble:

My role is to provide surprise,
To catch you all in "wild surmise"
As on Keats' Darien peak I rise
And don my crown to rhapsodize
All you gals and all you guys
Who in your finery comprise
The "Founding Folks" I eulogize!

Address To The Charter Class Of 1969

Hail, first and foremost, to you who were there,
Parked square in the heart of Park Square
And along an Avenue named for Columbus,
Where each Alumna and Alumnus
Set sail, as did he, on an uncharted sea,
For the "New World" —of UMB!

Yea, in '65 the Charter Class
At "Hard Hat U," aka "UGas"—
Braving the clutter and the clamors
Of rubble and rat-tat-tatting jackhammers—
Came here to the tune of that pied piper fellow,
Admissions Director F. Donald Costello!

O Boston has faced Press Gangs before—
Say, back in the 1812 War—
But they can't compare with Costello's version!
Not a school was spared his relentless incursion,
As he ranged far and wide, strong-armin' and wooin'
From Hull to Billerica, from Lynn to Methuen!

O you have to become very fast learners
When the faucets double for bunsen burners,
And you know if you fail to hold your breath,
You face asphyxiatory death.
(And hey, those in wait for an elevator
Are still holding their breath thirty years later!)

Then we entered the expansion phase,
Our salad, yea, our "Salada" days!
Days of "Stuart, Hale, and Sawyer"
(Sounds like we were retaining a lawyer!),
And if none of those three could quite suit you'all,
You'd come here, or to Liberty Mutual,
Or the Little Building, a seed sown
In the Deep Throat of the Combat Zone!

Here I add to my text—how can we ignore
The pervasive subtext of the Vietnam War:
Kent State blood; a strike in the spring;
Protest marches; bomb scares; draft counseling!
And on battlefronts local, a steady dilution
Of the language requirement. A New Constitution,
As Broderick gave his broadminded "say-so"
To a Forty-Sixty Student Ratio!

As for tenure grief, there was many a case in
Point—Walter Lehmann and Barbara Chasin;
Richard McCleary and Freda Salzman
And others. I tip my hat in acknowledgment
To those we let go. For 'tis by the grace
And grit of all who held this space
When the going was tough that we sit in this place
Of celebration. Let our embrace
Reach out to all our colleagues departed.
Let the welcome be full-throated, full-hearted.
Let bray of trumpet and sounding brass
Call forth Founding Fathers and Mothers en masse!

Now some of you here, when our lectures were dull ones
Would skip out of school for a cool one at Sull'vans.
Legend has it that it was the kind of bar where

They'd never let you leave without carfare:
If they saw you were down to your last four bits,
They'd tap you out, gratis, a last Bud or Schlitz.

Though we'd sometimes hit sub-shops for "to-go's,"
"Where it was at" was Patsio's.
The lime-rickeys, and Flash's young wife, would delight us.
And though the food gave instant gastritis,
And the decibels split your eardrums, Jeez!
Who cared when the "grass" was as thick as the grease!

More wicked than Jezebel were those jades
Of the South End sidewalks—the Meter Maids:
Those sharp-eyed and sharp-penciled vipers
Would hit us so hard 'neath our windshield wipers
That we ended up parking so far away
We'd run Marathon Races come Street-Cleaning Day!

And then there was the Site Search!
Doomed from the start was our hope to keep perch
In Park Square. My COPLEY SITE NOW button
Never did much mustard-cuttin'!
There were just too many opposing factors—
A tax-grubbing city, hand-rubbing contractors,
A notion that student populations
Belonged on remote Reservations!
And so they threw us out of this joint
And shunted us off to Columbia Point.

Now hermetically sealed behind triple panes
We look longingly back! We can't hear Logan's planes,
Nor the cry of a gull, nor the sound of the sea:
Great God, I think I'd rather be

Back where we came from, dodging cars,
Deafened by sirens, lured into bars,
Flanked by the Ritz and by South End sprawl,
By Washington Street and Symphony Hall!

But you folks had opened our doors so wide,
Had drawn all of Boston so deep inside,
That even this wrenching relocation
Never lost us our reputation
For giving, and living, an education
At the heart of a city that's "First in the Nation"!

We celebrate you. You are our heart.
You are the ones who gave us our start.
As our future stretches forth into eons,
Let the world pay heed to a poet's paeans
Of praise. I raise this toast to ye'uns!
"Here's to '69! The best 'uman bein's
I know go by the name 'UMB-ans!'"

40th Anniversary Gala

I rise before you, Poet Laureate,
With a four-minute limit in which to glory at—
Our "Annus Quadragessimus"!
Dare I "go for it"? Why, "Yessimus!"
But that I may be abbreviatory
In telling The UMass/Boston Story,
I've decided the best way to do it
Is to play somebody who slept right through it!
So, as this white beard may give you an inkling
Your bard will tonight be Rip Van Winkling
As he invites you all to follow
Him deep, deep down into Sleepy Hollow.
As for my first long snooze at UMass,
It may well have been because Boston Gas
In '65 provided some rooms
That rumor has it were still filled with fumes!

Then my eyelashes open to hope-dashing glumness!
No sign of Arlington or Columbus,
No Armory, Sawyer, Hale, no Salada,
No Sully's, no Patsio's! Wiser and sadda'
I take off my "Copley Site Now" button,
All those "Downtown Dreams" having come to nuttin'!
But then, looking up, I caught sight of the ocean,
Scanned further and lo, a Land of Goshen
Had risen up, Columbia Pointed,
With the name "Harbor Campus" reanointed!
I got caught up on campus lore again—
Van Ummerson, Carlo, and Corrigan;
Learned we'd been split in two, then reformed;
Heard ongoing rumors we might get dormed;
Was pleased to see that Admission's prudence
Still brought us the same broad mix of students–
Every age, faith, color, and country–heartwarming
To see the UMB beehive still swarming!

That same year, '85, Wheatley's sixth floor air
Became one day so thin that there
And then I descended into such stupor
It's taken twenty more years to recuper-
ate! Now by fate I awake to enter
A whole new era—a Campus Center
Ascending resplendent, seas and skies
Reflected in its glass! With sighs
Of wonder I greet this enterprise,
Which survived rescissions—"Penney-wise"—
And began through these last few years to restore a
Capacity to soar, thanks to Gora,
And now, praise be, I raise my eyes to
Rest—O blest be!—on this Motley Crew,
As variegated and diverse
As the banner 'neath which we see Keith rehearse
Our mission—the one that from the start
Gave all of us who came here heart,
Instilled in us during those Cro-Magnon
Days of Frank Broderick and Paul Gagnon:
Then let's draw from this city and pour back in—
From McCormack and Lipke and Wheatley and Quinn
And Healey, a UMB dedicated
To seeing that everyone's educated—
To accomplish which we need to fuse its
Mission to reach throughout Massachusetts,
And beyond. Yea, from our seaside station
Let us show forth to every nation,
A beacon shining, a banner unfurled,
That draws to our light, and our cause, the whole world!

Ode To The Campus Center

Sing, Muse, the wonders come to pass
On our Harbor Campus at UMass,
As steel and limestone, brick and glass
Combine in so fine a calculus
Of line it's "Cloud Nine"miraculous—
How the sunlight so streams through all the floors
It almost seems that we're outdoors
And the cantilevered rooflines swing
Skywards as if we might take wing!
Oh, we knew we had as Chancellor a
"Mover and Shaker" in Joanne Gora,
But when she declared, "We will build on our strengths,"
Who could have dreamed she would go to such lengths
As this! Over three-hundred-thousand square feet!
Birch used for every desk and seat,
And for each door and railing, cherry!
Such "details, details" everywhere! Ye
Gods! The facades! The marble walls!
Terrazzo tiles! And lo, in the halls,
Carpeting! Be still my heart!
And in this wondrous work of art,
Students can now do "one-stop shopping":
No more back-and-forth wind-blown hopping
From Quinn to McCormack to Science to Wheatley
Now everything has been housed neatly
In accessible user-friendly spaces!
And see! See how our Campus faces
The ocean., how through our wide front door
We welcome all to Columbia's shore!
And now, Muse, as you begin your
Majestic tour through these curvilinear
Spaces, as 'mongst us mortals you enter
The portals of this Campus Center,
Vouchsafe me one last volley thunderous
That I may celebrate the wondrous
Prospects that lie ahead of us.

For, having erected this edifice,
Our beacon shall shine o'er land and sea
Showing the great University
We are—and will still greater be!

Unthoroughly Departmental

Pray hark unto your quondam bard,
As I mark "The Changing of the Guard"—
From Gemini, from those "Twin Stars,"
Into this single Man from Mars!
O, I see us continuing, led by Bob Crossley,
Down Ph. D. Roads! Wizard off Oz'ly,
He'll proceed, despite deans and Halloween witches
(Whose spells and hexes vex us with glitches!)
And bolstered by the substance and pith
And the Job-like patience of St. George Smith,
He'll prevail, and we shall have the freedom
To grant entry into Ph. Dee-dom!
Yea, we shall have, right here, a group
Wearing the doctoral liripoop!
Hallucinatory? An H.G. Wells
Air waves hoax? Only time tells.
But in the meantime, over dessert,
Let me appease, as I may, the hurt
We feel from the thousand ways we've been thwarted,
By giving thanks, open-hearted,
To Martha and Al , as they complete
Their dual term. And oh, wasn't it sweet
To see "chair" so expand to become a "loveseat"!

Yea, I sing the roles bifurcatory
Of Al and Martha: the stirring story
Of how these two divided neatly
The tasks Herculean of Sixth Floor Wheatley.
How we all looked on, incredulous,
As, assiduous and sedulous,
Al somehow managed to schedule us—
A feat his Department forgivingly blames
On time spent playing computer games,
Honing the prestidigital talents
With which he produced Bismarkian Balance!
Divvying up the "Better and Worse" days—
MWF's, Tuesdays-and-Thursdays—
He would cast, in the end, a last cold eye

And frame us in fearful symmetry!

And Martha—one who never "just flatters"—
Brought "A Touch of the Poet" to Personnel Matters;
And though often she could give no raise,
The fine exactitudes of phrase
With which she couched, and vouched for, our praise,
Gave to everyone here such "sense of worth"
That even the long-continuing dearth
Of money—Merit, or otherwise—
Was offset by the fact that, in Martha's eyes,
We all shared a place in The Gallery
Of Masters, whatever our salary!
And we knew that as soon as ever she could
She'd see us as rich as she knew we were good!

Though I cannot touch upon everyone,
Let me take a random run,
And where I can, bring a blush to bloom
Here and there about the room.
To begin with, your poet Pindaric ponders
How best to sing Rebecca Saunders:
Oh, let's bang on the drum and raise a cheer
That she's "pulled out this plum": "Alum of the Year"!
And Vivian Zamel—Golly-oh-Gee!—
Is this year's "Professor of Pedagogy!
On account of her, the Tower of Babel–
Long a symbol of meaningless gabble–
Is now—Hail Diversity—"making sense,"
A place luxurious, varied, and dense
With "eat-your-heart-out" eloquence!
And let's give a "hooray" hip-hipient
To our Chancellor's Prize recipient!
Hey, choosin' Susan was "easy pickins":
A choice "appropriate as the Dickens"!
And to Pulitzer Prize Winner, Lloyd Schwartz, a
Loud cheer! "Del Destino," our oo-la "La Forza"!
Literature has gained enlargement
Through the plays and novels of Lynn Haire-Sargeant!
And Willey-Nilly, the End Game
Of Retirement has claimed our Grand Dame, Mame!

And oh, an early sunset's glory
Illumines Joanne Stokkink-Fatori!

Join in as we sound a loud hosanna
On the graduation of Adrianna!
And let me say of those "real brains,"
Like hers, Mary Bonner's, and Ann Lane's,
And, of course, Janet Mickevich's—
We'd be lost without them, you can bet your britches!
(In my recitation. Dio Mio,
I misspoke Mary Bonner, said "Mary Keogh"!
A very bad mistake, I fear;
No Almond Joys for the rest of this year!)

And oh, let's drink a tequila toast
To welcome back Sheila Post,
And let's hope she makes "a cool million"
In the Market Place with her study Melvillean!
And may Lois Rudnick be just as "blissed" as
Sheila—with loot from Utopian Vistas!
(What poor Tom "O'Grady Says" costs but a quarter
Or so in the Boston Irish Reporter!)
And should some woman want to be taken
For a man, read Pat Powell's new novel Jamaican!
And for all whom anxiety overwhelms,
Read Our Man from the Provinces, Alan Helms!
Donaldo Macedo, never a shirker,
Brings us Freire's Teacher As Cultural Worker.
And though Writing on the Job has appealed;
To John Brereton, it's not just a Man's Field!
For Mansfield, Meg, has found ways terrific
To render gender unspecific!
Soon you'll see UMB's new promotional movie,
In which Lee and Monica, marvy-groovy,
Light up the screen! What a guy! What a doll!
Academia's Bogey and Bacall!
Then there's techno-whiz Libby, Software Sage,
Logging us up on The Home Page!

Turning now to the "musical chairs" scene,
Dick's gone to the Provost, Neal's gone to the Dean;

And Ellie is now the Dean of Ed
And Honors has Monica as its Head;
Pam's Co-Director of CIT:
Will we lose any more? Will this ACE—
Assessment of Curriculum—
Be a numbing "Fee, Fi, Fo, Fum"
That bespeaks our becoming moribund?
Or will we be saved by The Carrot Fund?—

From which we get over two thousand smackers
For having attracted such generous backers!
Maybe this will allow us to burst fiscal strictures:
Buy some furniture, frame some pictures,
Be not, as has been our wont, so chary
While stocking the Gittleman Library!
Hey, who knows what wonders may ensue
As we tap these new sources of revenue!
It so boggles my mind that your bard is through
Save for one final thought. Let us not be harsh on
Our new Chair. Oh, I know he's a Martian.
But new evidence in Antarctic rock
Shows we too may be chips off that self-same block!
And another factor: Science Fiction
May produce most post-Millennial Diction!
And since this genre is our Chair's predilection,
Great honor may come of that "far-out" connection.
Hey, we loved E.T.! Bob deserves our affection!

The Watermark is UMass Boston's student-run journal of arts and literature. Produced bi-annually it serves as an outlet for the highest quality writing and visual art by UMass Boston's undergraduate and graduate student body.

Submissions are accepted year round and are selected by staff members via a democratic and anonymous process with the overall goal of offering students an opportunity to be published. Information about submitting or getting involved can be found online.

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